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Hafa Adai!

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CNMI mourns Inos' death

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Gov. Eloy S. Inos died yesterday after a protracted battle with diabetes, making him the only CNMI governor to pass away while in office. He was 66 years old.

News of his passing at 9:42 yesterday morning, Dec. 29, was confirmed by administration officials around noon.

The Commonwealth and United States flags soon flew half-staff outside the Office of the Governor and all over the Commonwealth.

Lt. Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, who took over the reins of government, is now the youngest ever to serve as CNMI governor. Thirty minutes into a 9am meeting yesterday, Torres and his staff were abruptly called out and informed by the Inos family of the governor's passing. The lieutenant governor was sworn into office at 11:45am yesterday in a private

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Lt. Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, center, is sworn into office as the Commonwealth's newest governor during a ceremony at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. At right is first lady Diann Torres holding the Bible, while at left is Office of the Governor public information specialist L.J. Castro. DENNIS B. CHAN

Torres becomes governor; Hocog is lt. gov.

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

In the wake of Gov. Eloy S. Inos' death, acting governor Ralph Anthony Deleon Guerrero Torres ascended to the post of the CNMI governor yesterday morning at 11:45, administration officials said. Lawmakers, the mayor of Tinian, judges, justices, and CNMI attorney general attended the private ceremony inside Torres' office. There were no clapping of hands or applause, officials attending the ceremony later said, and the atmosphere inside Torres' office was somber.

About two hours after Inos' passing, Torres became the youngest ever to serve as CNMI governor. He is also believed to be the first governor to have served in the Senate, and the first governor born after the approval of the CNMI Covenant over three decades ago. Torres was born on Aug. 6, 1979.

Now lieutenant governor Victor Hocog, formerly the Senate president, was flying in from Rota at the time, but was sworn in with Torres during a public ceremony at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe later in the afternoon.

According to administration officials present, CNMI Attorney General Edward Manibusan spoke of the succession process during the private ceremony yesterday.

Manibusan said there would be no other documentation needed and the lieutenant governor would be the governor and the Senate president would be lieutenant governor, as mandated by the

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'The CNMI is a better home because of Inos'

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

"The Commonwealth is a better place, a better home to its residents because of Gov. Inos."

This was how Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas summarized the tremendous work and significant contributions that the late governor Eloy S. Inos has done for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands after serving in both public and private offices.

San Nicolas

As the heartbreaking news of his passing yesterday morning spread quickly, many of his constituents and fellow leaders were saddened.

"It's a sad day in the Commonwealth because of his passing but I'm very happy for all of what he leaves behind, his legacy, not just as a governor, but as a lieutenant governor, Finance secretary,

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Condolences for the CNMI pour in

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) mourned yesterday the untimely passing of Gov. Eloy S. Inos, saying, "Our hearts are broken knowing that we can no longer look to Gov. Inos to guide the Northern Mariana Islands."

"We have lost a wise and hard-working leader today," said Sablan in a statement. "Andrea and I send our deepest condolences to the Governor's family. We will keep him and them in our prayers.

"Gov. Inos gave all he had to the people he served until

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INSIDE

WORLD

Iraqi forces backed by U.S. airstrikes drive Islamic State out of the center of Ramadi.

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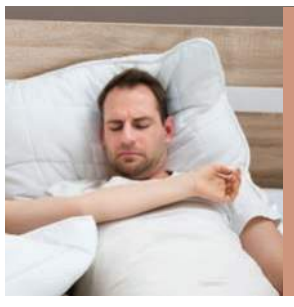

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Happy couples find joy in sleeping apart.

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LIFE & STYLE

New Year's resolutions come as big strokes and small victories, along with a high rate of failure.

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Local

Immigration lawyers: CWs, don't panic—yet

DAISY DEMAPAN
Attorneys Maya Kara and Bruce Mailman speak to the Society for Human Resource Management-NMI Chapter at their meeting yesterday, addressing better visa options in the face of numerous pending CW renewals.

By DAISY DEMAPAN
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REPORTER

The overarching opinion of immigration attorneys Maya Kara and Bruce Mailman in addressing the increasingly significant issue of visa options for nonresident workers is for CNMI-only workers not to panic just yet.

At the Society for Human Resource Management NMI Chapter meeting yesterday, both lawyers highlighted viable options and better alternatives in terms of ensuring employable workers.

Kara said, "Commonwealth controlled immigration ended in November 2011 and now we have a transition period. Umbrella permits and CNMI entry permits are no longer relevant except to prove status prior to November 2011," especially for those considering family based immigration status.

The CW visa classification has been in effect while the CNMI foreign worker permit system transitions to U.S. immigration law. During this transition period, employers of nonimmigrant workers who are ineligible for other employment-based nonimmigrant visa classifications can apply for temporary permission to employ workers in the CNMI under the CW classification.

"By 2019, there will be no more exceptions until Congress decides on the issue or, after the presidential election, what direction their immigration policy will go," she said.

She said the only legal option that can be done for late CW-1 renewals is for them to stop working.

"Your workers have to stop working when permits expire," she said, highlighting the legal dilemma if employees refuse.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, transitional workers are expected to find a better alternative immigration status before the end of the transition period if they wish to remain in the CNMI. The rule allows time for employers to adjust their hiring practices and for eligible foreign workers to obtain nonimmigrant or immigrant visa classifications.

Mailman noted that workers who stop working due to the expiration of their CW permits still have a 120-day tolling period to wait for their renewal without leaving the CNMI.

He said a regulatory amendment is still pending since May 2014 that, if approved, will allow CW-1 employees 240 days to work after expiration if a timely renewal is pending.

The attorneys warned HR managers that CW-1 cannot be converted to H-1B or H-2B or any other nonimmigrant position without a change in job description, duties, and employee qualifications.

If the qualifications are changed according to visa option guidelines, non-immigrant visa options open up to H-visa, L visa, E visa, R visa, and T & U visas options.

However, "most CW-1 positions cannot be converted into H-1B or H-2B. It all comes down to how job duties are set out and for those worrying about renewal, U.S. immigration is saying that they are peddling as fast as they can,"

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Judge raps police for illegal use of traffic stop

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho reminded the prosecution and the Department of Public Safety yesterday that it is illegal to use a routine traffic stop as a pretext to conduct a drug search.

Camacho made the admonition before granting the Office of the Attorney General's oral motion to dismiss the drug case against Dusty N. Nisarafach without prejudice. That means the prosecution may re-file the case in the future.

Nisarafach, 48, was immediately released from custody.

Camacho said both the U.S. and the CNMI constitutions protect an individual's right to illegal searches and seizures.

Nisarafach was pulled over by police for traffic violations in Kagman 3 in the early hours of Dec. 21 and he was allegedly found in possession of methamphetamine or "ice" and other drug paraphernalia.

Nisarafach was arrested for illegal possession of a controlled substance. He was also cited for having an expired vehicle registration and not having a driver's license.

At yesterday's preliminary hearing, police detective Andrew S. Taimanao testified that police officer Rudolfo Hermosilla, a former Drug Enforcement investigator now assigned to DPS patrol unit, made a traffic violator stop on Nisarafach based on an expired registration. When Nisarafach stated he did not have his driver's license with him, Hermosilla arrested him.

Camacho said that, based on the testimony, Hermosilla proceeded to conduct a drug search of the vehicle under the guise of an inventory.

In Taimanao's written report, he stated that while one officer was talking to the driver, identified as Nisarafach, he noticed a white ziplock baggy with a glass tube in it hidden on the side of the driver's seat and the center console.

Camacho said he inquired if Hermosilla made the arrest based on the traffic violation or a criminal offense, and that Taimanao testified that Hermosilla made the arrest based on the traffic violations.

Assistant attorney general Elizabeth Weintraub then made an oral motion to dismiss the case without prejudice. Camacho granted the motion to dismiss.

In admonishing the prosecution and DPS, Camacho said a warrant based on probable cause and signed by a judge is necessary to conduct a search.

"There are very limited exceptions to conduct a warrantless search (which still needs probable cause). None are present in this case," the judge pointed out.

Camacho said a person has an expectation of privacy when driving on a public road, and that if there is a minor traffic violation the proper procedure is for the police to issue a traffic citation.

Camacho said the law allows an officer to make an arrest for a serious traffic violation such as driving under the influence, reckless driving, eluding a police officer, and others. He said an officer can also make an arrest if the person refuses to sign the traffic citation.

Camacho said none of these situations occurred in Nisarafach's case.

The judge also noted what he described as a "disturbing pattern" in the past couple of months where DPS officers use routine traffic stops as an illegal pretext to conduct drug searches.

"The court now admonishes these officers to stop these illegal and improper actions as it violates the Constitution," Camacho said.

To assist the officers and prosecutors, Camacho briefly listed what the U.S. Supreme Court has stated on the issue of search of vehicles.

Assistant public defender Tillman Clark served as counsel for Nisarafach, who has a previous "ice" case.

On Feb. 12, 2013, Nisarafach pleaded guilty to the offense of possession of controlled substance. He was placed on probation for one year plus other conditions. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

IMMIGRATION

From Page 2

Mailman said.

Kara adds that if filings are non-frivolous and timely—employees submit renewals at their recommendation of six months in advance—and USCIS has still not issued a status update, contacting them directly is the best option.

"If your dates of filing are more than 90 days as stated on your receipt," you may also contact Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's office who is currently working with federal officials to push forward with renewals.

Spouses and minor children under 18 years of age are eligible for CW-2 status, while children over 18 years of age and parents or other relatives are not eligible for CW-2 status. Also, although CW-2 are allowed to stay, they aren't allowed to work.

"What you need to do is consider any factors for a more permanent status. For your CWs in particular, apply six months early. Dates are important. Don't cancel one status while applying for another and also train and hire U.S. qualified workers every chance you get," Mailman said.

They said that CW status can be converted to green card status but that the CW status must be continually renewed until the new status is approved.

Lastly and legally speaking, if a CW renewal is late, "the best thing you can do is buy a ticket for your employee to return to their country and work out a petition with their consulate. Otherwise, if an employer is allowing an expired CW to work, penalties will be assessed and they'll most likely be barred from hiring alien workers," he said.

Despite the catastrophic events caused by Typhoon Soudelor and the undersea fiber optic cable break, the attorneys say, USCIS has not provided any flexibility, adding stress to CW renewals.

The reality, he said, is that "there hasn't been a statement or policy on whether CW renewals are given priority in terms of the CW cap," when the program ends in 2019.

If there are more employees and applicants as the cap lowers, he said, some may be out of work.

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AG: No special election for Rota senator's seat

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

There will be no special election for a Rota senator's position that is has been left vacant with the swearing in of Senate President Victor B. Hocog as lieutenant governor, according to Attorney General Edward Manibusan and Commonwealth Election Commission officials.

In an interview yesterday, Manibusan said whoever was the second highest vote getter in the 2014 election for Rota senator's position will take the seat.

"That has always been the rule," the AG pointed out.

That means that former senator Paul A. Manglona will take fill up the position of Hocog, considering that he finished third in the Senate race for Rota behind Steven K. Mesngon and Teresita A. Santos.

Manibusan agreed that Manglona is indeed the next highest vote getter.

Commonwealth Election Commission acting executive director Julita Villagomez and CEC administrative officer Kyla Igitol also confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that there will be no special election for the lone Rota senator's seat.

Villagomez and Igitol said Paul Manglona will fill up the vacant Rota senator's position, if he is willing to serve.

Villagomez and Igitol cited the law that provides that "a vacancy in the Legislature shall be filled by special election if one-half or more of the term remains."

The law also provides that "if less than one-half of the term remains, the governor shall fill up the vacancy by appointing the unsuccessful candidate for the office in the last election who received the largest number of votes and is willing to serve or, if no candidate is available, a person qualified for the office from the district represented."

Manglona was the longest serving member of the Legislature after 25 years, thrice as Senate president, until Hocog defeated him in the 2012 elections.

In November 2013, Manglona returned to the Senate after then-acting governor Jude Hofschneider appointed him to the 18th Senate when the CNMI Supreme Court ruled that the unsuccessful candidate in the 2012 election—and not in the 2009 polls—should be appointed to the seat vacated by former Rota senator Juan M. Ayuyu.

On the passing of governor Eloy S. Inos, Manibusan said, "It's a very sad day."

Manibusan said he knows that Inos had a lot of things that he wanted to do for the Commonwealth and he hopes that the Torres administration will move forward with Inos' ideas and plans and move the Commonwealth forward.

"And we're all going be part of it. We're going to help move the Commonwealth forward," he said.

As the chief legal officer of the Commonwealth, Manibusan said he looks forward to working with Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres.

"We will work with him and make sure that his policies are carried forward. We look forward to working with him," he said.

TORRES

From Page 1

CNMI Constitution.

Torres was sworn into office with his wife, Diann, holding the Bible. Mrs. Torres did the same during the public ceremony in Susupe to a packed audience of department heads and agency officials, with family and friends and community members and business leaders attending the event that started around 3:30pm.

Around 15 minutes before 4pm, Torres raised his right hand and put his left hand on the Bible. Chief Justice Alexander Castro administered the oath of office.

"…I will faithfully discharge my duties as governor to the best of my ability, so help me God," said Torres, to wide applause. And with that, he was governor.

While the ceremony was for Torres and Hocog, the loss of Inos was the center of their remarks.

"This is a speech I never want to deliver," Torres said to open his remarks. "This is a speech that our governor left."

Torres continued in vernacular, offering his condolences to the Inos family and speaking of traits the late governor had that "you couldn't find in people." These traits made Torres comfortable to run for election with Inos and trust him, he said.

"He made me feel loved and cared" for, Torres said. "When I call him, he was always there."

"One thing I learned from him—and I want everyone to know—he said, 'Lieutenant, you're going to be tested. Your relationships are going to be tested. Your integrity, your friendship, your family, and in even between us. But one thing I ask, whatever you do, take the time, think about it twice, maybe three times, whatever the decision you make, I will support that,'" Torres recalled.

Torres assured that he will continue to work to fulfill Inos' dreams "to do what's right."

"The Commonwealth will be stronger because of his guidance. That I can assure. I may not know everything. But rest assured, I will be working with everyone," Torres said. "We will work harder."

"I ask that for the remainder of the week, we appreciate Gov. [Inos] for the things he has given to this Commonwealth," Torres said.

The Senate expects to reorganize and elect a Senate president in the coming days, according to Sens. Franciso M. Borja and Sixto Igisomar, following the move of Hocog to the lieutenant governor post. Borja, who was Senate vice president, is now acting president.

INOS

From Page 1

ceremony in his office, officials present at the ceremony said.

Inos will be remembered as a father figure, mentor, and meticulous mathematician and friend, who cared and thought deeply about the betterment of the Commonwealth, according to multiple interviews with lawmakers, Cabinet, and other officials on Capital Hill yesterday, as officials—some teary-eyed and visibly pained—filed in and out of the building of the Office of the Governor.

Inos died in a Seattle, Washington hospital on Monday, mainland time. Despite initial signs of improvement after a surgery earlier this year, his condition deteriorated, the administration said in a statement yesterday. Details from his doctors of his medical condition were not available, and the exact cause of his death or whether he was in a coma when he passed were not available as of press time.

Inos' rise to power was unprecedented. A former Finance Department secretary from 2006 to 2009, Inos was appointed lieutenant governor by then-governor Benigno Fitial in 2009, after the previous lieutenant governor, Timothy Villagomez, resigned after being convicted of federal corruption charges.

Inos ran with Fitial for re-election later that year and won. He succeeded Fitial in 2013, when Fitial resigned after being impeached in office. Inos was re-elected last year November.

Rep. Angel Demapan, who served as a press secretary under both Fitial and Inos, recalled his close and personal connection to the governor, whom he considered a mentor and one that he emulates.

"…I am going to miss him," an emotional Demapan said yesterday. "My biggest memory of the governor is always going to be of a man of policy. Every time I worked for him, the work just never ended because he had such a huge passion and drive to help, and we would work round the clock. During the budget process one of the years I was here, we worked 'til 4am and came back to work at 7am."

"How hard he worked despite his sickness, how hard he worked just because he wanted our people to live in a community that prospered" is how Demapan will remember Inos.

Unexpected

Inos' passing came as a shock to the CNMI on Tuesday, just two days after the Christmas Day weekend ended.

Labor Secretary Edith Deleon Guerrero said she received an email yesterday for a Cabinet meeting at 11:30am. She was happy, thinking that they were going to Skype or FaceTime with the governor to wish him a belated Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, she said. But then suddenly she received a call that informed her otherwise.

"We lost a good man. The Commonwealth lost a very good man," Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune*. "He's got a very beautiful heart. He always meant good for the people. He had faith in us as his Cabinet members."

"He was like a father figure to us," added Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert Guerrero yesterday. "I think that says everything about him."

Commerce Secretary Mark Rabauliman remembers Inos as fair and accommodating—a leader that enabled his Cabinet to run their department to what he envisions, but find a way to get to that goal.

"He had a lot of wisdom to impart especially to us up-and-coming leaders," Rabauliman said. "He's always taught us of trials and tribulations he's gone through so that way we don't make the same mistakes."

Inos served many years in local government. He was deputy director and director of Finance under the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands from 1982 to 1987, and director of Finance for the CNMI government from 1987 to 1994 under both the Pedro P. Tenorio and Lorenzo Deleon Guerrero administrations, according to a biography available on the CNMI government website.

Oscar Babauta, an Inos administration official and former House speaker, asked the people of the Commonwealth to pray for the repose of Inos' soul, and offer prayers for his family.

"The governor and I have been in the political venture for over three decades," Babauta told reporters in the lobby of the Office of the Governor building. "We shared a lot in common."

Babauta said Inos always had the tendency to quiz family members and professional friends to test the ability and caliber of the people that he encountered. That's what he admired about Inos the most.

"…Because he wakes a lot of us up in coming up with and scrambling for answers—and that's the guy he is," Babauta said. "This governor is a mathematician. I can't fool him with numbers. The people of the Commonwealth will share the loss of a great man."

Looking forward

During his several years as governor, Inos oversaw the arrival on Saipan of an unprecedented casino industry, whose exclusive licensing fees helped bail out a collapsing NMI Retirement Fund.

Recently, Inos issued an executive order to task the formation of an interagency task force to fight the war on methamphetamine, or ice, which has been plaguing the CNMI. He also recently challenged the U.S. military's plans to conduct live-fire training and bombing on Pagan and Tinian, calling them moves that would radically and unilaterally alter the federal and local legal foundations that established the CNMI and set up its relationship with the U.S. and the amount of land and activity allowed for military training. In light of this issue—and the impending expiration of the contract worker program in 2019—Inos in November called for direct consultation with the U.S. White House.

"When I covered his ceremony," said public information specialist, Luis John DLG. Castro yesterday, "there was a lot of hope and optimism when he became governor, and I shared that same hope and optimism that everybody had. He was a wonderful person to work with…We are forever grateful." ***(with Fraulein S. Villanueva)***

CONDOLENCES

From Page 1

the very end. We watched his declining health with sadness over the last years. Yet, when others might have let go of their responsibility to others to care for themselves, Gov. Inos clearly used every ounce of his strength to keep working for the people and the islands he loved. His dedication is an example to us all.

"Personally, I will miss his counsel and the experiences of a lifetime of public service and private accomplishment that Governor Inos always so generously shared," said Sablan.

Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU) also expressed deep sadness at the news of Inos' passing. "He was a tireless advocate for the people of the [CNMI] and whose leadership was instrumental during a time of great change and opportunity. Today the CNMI has lost a respected public servant. On behalf of the people of Guam, I extend my thoughts and prayers to his family and the people of the Northern Mariana Islands during this difficult time."

Guam Gov. Eddie Calvo ordered flags in the territory to be flown at half-staff beginning yesterday afternoon until the day of Inos' interment.

"We were deeply grieved to hear about the passing of Gov. Eloy Inos. He was a strong leader to the people of the Northern Marianas, a good husband and father, and a dear friend to us and the people of Guam. Governor Inos always put his people first and worked hard to find ways to improve the quality of life in the Northern Mariana Islands," said Calvo in a statement.

Guam Speaker Judith T. Won Pat also extended her sympathies to the family of Inos. "I am deeply saddened to learn of Governor Inos's passing. Governor Inos championed for the [CNMI] for more than 40 years both in the public and private sectors. He gave generously of his time, talents, and resources to enhance the lives of the people of the Northern Marianas. On behalf of [the 33rd Guam Legislature], I send our deepest condolences. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends and with the people of Northern Marianas."

Anthony Babauta, the former Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Areas, also joined the people of the Northern Marianas in honoring Inos' memory. "During my tenure as Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas, U.S. Department of the Interior, I worked closely with Governor Inos to accomplish many mutual goals to improve the lives of the people the Commonwealth. These infrastructure projects that we both believed were of utmost importance to the economic growth of the islands included delivery of reliable water and power to the community, reforming health delivery to all residents of the island, refurbishing the islands' roads and the protection of precious resources such as our coral reefs and the bountiful ocean fisheries. Through those many hours of collaborating with Eloy, I grew to know and respect him as not just a public servant but as a friend who shared the same passion for his people that was second only to his love of his family. I send my condolences to the Inos family as well as the entire Commonwealth on the passing of a great leader."

Guam Sen. Tina Rose Muña Barnes also offered her deepest condolences to the Inos family and the people of the CNMI "as they mourn the loss of their beloved leader."

"Gov. Eloy Inos was a good man and a great friend of the people of Guam. My family and I are deeply saddened by the news of his passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those whose lives were changed by Gov. Inos' leadership," Muña Barnes said. "We especially want to send our deepest condolences to the Inos family, his friends, and loved ones."

"As a graduate of the University of Guam and a Triton for life, Gov. Inos understood the very special relationship that exists between people of Guam and the people of the CNMI. We mourn his passing and believe that his lifelong work to improve the lives of his people will never be forgotten."

Bank of Guam's Lou Leon Guerrero, the board of directors, management and staff of the Bank of Guam also sent their condolences. "We are deeply saddened by the death of our friend, Gov. Inos. We share the deep loss with our family and friends in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and we are there for them during their time of grief and loss." ***(Saipan Tribune)***

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‘Converting all CWs to H1s, H2s is difficult’

By DAISY DEMAPAN
daisy_demapan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Immigration lawyer Bruce Mailman said it is very difficult to convert CNMI-only contract workers to H1 or H2 visa holders.

Responding to questions from the business sector and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. during yesterday’s Society for Human Resource Management NMI Chapter meeting at the Pacific Islands Club, Mailman said this is particularly difficult for an H1 visa because it applies to specialty occupations.

“When you sign the attestation as an employer for a CW employer, you are attesting and swearing, under penalty of perjury, that the position is not qualified for any other nonimmigrant status. So if you want to change someone from a CW to an H1, because they just so happen to have a four-year degree and are qualified and the position could be a specialty occupation, you’re going to have to change the position, the job title, and the actual job duties or [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service] is not going to buy it,” he said.

“H1 is a particularly difficult upgrade because you get very complicated requests for evidence. They are very skeptical that a CW is suddenly in a specialty occupation. We’ve had mixed reviews for example, in making accountants into comptrollers...it all comes down to the details,” he added.

“[In terms] of making nurses into H1, two-year nurses [those holding an associate degree in nursing]” cannot qualify. “For the four-year nurses, you’re still going to have to change their duties but this is really the time for them to consider the possibility of employment-based green cards,” he said.

“This works very well with CW because it’s a dual-intent visa. If you got a nonimmigrant visa [under current U.S. immigration conditions and not CNMI exceptions] and [USCIS] gets the slightest hint that you are what is called an intending immigrant, you are out. But with CW, H1, L1 and to some degree the investor visa, if you say to yourself that you’re going to take this nonimmigrant visa status and try to stay here, you can go for it. That’ll take a longer time but it encourages better workforce hiring practices for employers,” he said.

When looking into a conversion of status, Mailman said the prevailing wage, an increase in salary according to work duties, and the proposed Fair Labor Standard Act overtime rules are something to consider.

He said the U.S. Department of Labor’s proposed changes to FLSA overtime will significantly increase the salary that must be paid to exempt employees.

These changes include an anticipated increase minimum exempt salary from $23,660 to at least $40,000; well beyond that for highly compensated employees which is anticipated for over $122,000, automatic changes to salary threshold to keep pace with inflation and changes in definition of duties.

Although it’s an anticipated issue and not an immediate concern, he said that everyone must prepare since it is subject to national politics.

Warning out for small sea vessels

Based on information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center, moderate to fresh trade winds with frequent gusts over 25 knots and combined seas of 8 to 10 feet will persist for a couple more days producing hazardous conditions for operators of small craft.

A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6pm Thursday. Moderate to fresh trade winds with frequent gusts over 25 knots and combined seas of 8 to 10 feet will persist for the next few days producing hazardous conditions for operators of small craft.

The general public and inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, are being advised to avoid sailing in these conditions. If travel by boat is necessary, exercise caution when entering or leaving harbors and inlets. (EOC)

AMP Visitor Center closed for holidays

In observance of the upcoming holiday, the American Memorial Park Visitor Center will close on New Year’s Eve, Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015, at 3pm and will remain closed on New Year’s Day, Friday, Jan. 1, 2016.

The American Memorial Park Visitor Center will resume normal hours of operation from 9am to 5pm on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016. ***(NPS)***

Lawyer summoned to show-cause hearing

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood has ordered lawyer Stephen C. Woodruff to appear and explain why the federal court should not impose on him the local courts’ order disbarring him from the practice of law in the CNMI.

As this developed, Woodruff filed last week before the CNMI Supreme Court a petition for rehearing.

In an order filed in federal court on Monday, Tydingco-Gatewood ordered Woodruff to appear in court on Jan. 22, 2016, to explain why reciprocal discipline should not be imposed on him.

Woodruff was given no later than Jan. 19 to inform the court whether he has petitioned for rehearing in the CNMI Supreme Court or for certiorari in the U.S. Supreme Court.

The lawyer was required to report on the status of any such petitions.

Tydingco-Gatewood said if the court decides that reciprocal discipline is warranted, it will then entertain Woodruff’s request for a stay in the federal court proceedings.

In his petition for rehearing, Woodruff said the July 3, 2014, decision of a single CNMI Supreme Court justice to deny his motion to consolidate this case prevented him from demonstrating how the earlier interim suspension case tainted the disciplinary proceedings in the Superior Court, denying him his right to due process of law.

Secondly, Woodruff said, the Oct. 14, 2014, decision of one CNMI Supreme Court justice to refuse to accept his opening brief in the wrong font size and striking 38 percent of his opening brief, including 74 percent of his argument, violated his due process rights.

Finally, he said, the action of the federal court’s clerk on Oct. 28, 2014 “rejecting” four documents that he previously filed, and again on March 12, 2015 “rejecting” two more documents that he previously filed, and removing all record of those filings from the electronic docket derogated his due process rights.

In June 2013, Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman ordered Woodruff’s disbarment for 44 violations of the Model Rules of Professional Conduct. Woodruff appealed, asking the CNMI Supreme Court to reverse Wiseman’s order.

Recently, the CNMI Supreme Court affirmed Wiseman’s order disbarring Woodruff from the practice of law in the CNMI.

Public invited to special presentation on Sunday

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is inviting the public to a special presentation by Dr. Hideko Tamura Snider that will be held on Sunday, Jan. 3, at Charley’s Cabaret, Pacific Islands Club, starting at 6pm.

As a child of 10, Snider survived the atomic bomb attack that destroyed the city of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945.

She will discuss her life before the bomb, the attack itself, and the influence of that trauma upon her subsequent life in Japan and the United States.

Snider is the 2015 Hiroshima Ambassador for Peace and a retired psychiatric social worker from the University of Chicago Hospital.

She has authored a memoir recounting the moment titled *One Sunny Day: A Child’s Memories of Hiroshima* and a picture book for all ages about creating peace in the world called *When the Peace Tree Blooms*.

Additionally, Snider helped to found the “One Sunny Day Initiatives” that seeks to educate the public about the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and to plant seeds of peace, hope, and reconciliation among people of the world.

This event, which is a part of the council’s ongoing Community Lecture Series, is free of charge and open to the public. Please contact council staff at 235-4785 for more information. ***(NMI Humanities Council)***

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Interested applicants may contact Fuji Pacific, Inc. at 234-0583 and ask for Nita San Nicolas or fax resume and police clearance to 234-3605.

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The following is a list of accounts on deposit with First Hawaiian Bank: Checking accounts which have been inactive for 6 months or more; and Savings, Maximizer, and Money Market Accounts which have been inactive for 24 months or more as of 12/20/15.The funds from these accounts are scheduled to be transferred to the Commonwealth Treasurer during the month of FEB 2016. This is in compliance with the amendment to Section 20-20.4-005 (b) of the Northern Mariana Island Administrative Code Title 20 Department of Commerce Regulations. If your name is listed, please contact the Customer Consultant or Service Manager at First Hawaiian Bank, Gualo Rai or Oleai Branch, as soon as possible.

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IT ALL STARTS WITH YES

High Court reverses pot possession conviction

On Dec. 29, 2015, the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Commonwealth v. Kendall, 2015 MP 14*, reversing the trial court's judgment that convicted Brian Kendall of possession of a controlled substance.

On appeal, Kendall argued there was insufficient evidence to convict him of possession of a controlled substance because the evidence adduced at trial did not satisfy the essential elements of that crime. Specifically, he argued there was no evidence that could lead a reasonable juror to find him in actual or constructive possession of the marijuana found to the east of his residence.

The high court ruled in favor of Kendall. The justices explained that Kendall did not have actual possession of the marijuana because he never had direct physical control of the contraband. Moreover, the high court stated in paragraph 14 that Kendall did not constructively possess marijuana because "[t]he record, viewed in the light most favorable to government, merely indicates that a potted marijuana plant was found to the east of Kendall's home." Here, the high court noted that the record contained "no testimony that the plant was found on Kendall's property or in close proximity to the house, and the [photographic evidence was] only identified as a fair and accurate representation of the plant—not its location—on the day it was found." The Supreme Court concluded that it required "more evidence than a mere statement that a marijuana plant was found to the east of Kendall's home to find constructive possession." Therefore, it reversed Kendall's conviction and remanded to the trial court for proceedings consistent with the opinion.

The Supreme Court's full opinion is available at http://www.cnmilaw.org/supreme15.html. ***(NMI Judiciary)***

Low-cost spay/neuter clinic for dogs in January

The Saipan Mayor's Office, working with the Humane Society International and Saipan Cares for Animals, will be offering a low-cost spay/neuter clinic for dogs during the month of January.

"We are pleased to be able to host this clinic as a humane way to control the pet population on Saipan," said Mayor David M. Apatang. "We urge dog owners to take advantage of this opportunity and have their pets spayed and neutered."

The clinic will be held Mondays to Fridays during the month of January, and will be limited to 10 dogs per day. The location of the clinic will be at the Animal Shelter in Lower Base, down the road from Sparkle Clean.

"Spaying and neutering dogs is beneficial to both our pets and our community," said Spencer Marchadesch, Dog Control Program manager. "It helps to reduce overpopulation and also eliminates your pet's risk of testicular and ovarian cancers. Dogs that are spayed and neutered are also less likely to roam, which causes a public nuisance and also reduces the risk of automobile accidents. It also decreases aggressive behavior, including dog bites."

To reserve your spot, send an email to Jason Hudy with Saipan Cares for Animals. Hudy will be handling all reservations for the clinic and a reservation is mandatory. You can email Hudy at Jason@JasonHudy.com. He will return your email with a form to fill out to reserve a spot for your dog.

The suggested donation is $25, payable to Saipan Cares for Animals, which will help defray the costs of the clinic.

And as always, anyone interested in volunteering to walk dogs, or interested in adopting a dog or cat is encouraged to contact the Mayor's Office or Saipan Cares for Animals. You can contact the Saipan Mayors Office at 234-6208 or email Hudy with any further questions, and you can also visit the Saipan Cares for Animals Facebook page. ***(PR)***

Global Companies to tie up tuna vessels as fisheries access under treaty is in question

SAN DIEGO—The Global Companies (Ocean Global, LLC, Sea Global, LLC, and Pacific Global, LLC) are summoning their U.S. flag tuna vessels into port with a plan to suspend operations for the foreseeable future. The unprecedented move is in response to learning on Christmas Eve that all U.S. vessels operating in the Western Pacific Ocean under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty are to halt operations effective Dec. 31, 2015.

In a letter to the American Tunaboat Association, the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service Honolulu Director, Mike Tosatto, advised that all U.S. vessels are prohibited from fishing in the Western Pacific Ocean until licenses from the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency are issued for 2016.

Tosatto's guidance was direct: "Under the Treaty and SPTA, (16 USC 973c), U.S. purse seiners may not be used for fishing in the Licensing Area unless validly licensed under 50 CFR 300.32."

The purse seiner conflict is the result of a recent request by U.S. tuna fleet operators who asked the U.S. State Department, through the ATA, to reduce the number of purchased access days; the days were accepted just five months ago by the entire fleet during August negotiations in Brisbane, Australia.

While the Global Companies and other similar U.S. vessel operators are prepared to honor the commitments made in Brisbane, other members of the U.S. tuna fleet have now determined that they cannot pay the access fee due to economic hardship.

"Our fleet is essentially being held hostage by the actions of a few fleet operators, who are not willing or are unable to honor their commitments," said Global Companies shareholder J. Douglas Hines. "Regardless, the remaining U.S. vessel owners have no alternative but to adhere to the guidance in Tosatto's letter and tie up our vessels."

According Hines, one owner of a major fleet whose representative was present at the Brisbane meeting has now determined not to pay as he considers the agreement a "bad deal and not economically feasible," while another vessel owner that was part of Donwong Korean JV operation determined to simply exit the fishery and forego their commitment, leaving the balance of the fleet to absorb their commitment.

"Although The Global Companies will continue to support ongoing efforts of U.S. State Department to resolve the controversy, our position remains that vessels that pay their days should be granted licenses and the access that comes with it, and that the FFA can sell the days not needed by the U.S. fleet," Hines said.

Without a new treaty or interim agreement, all U.S. funds headed to the FFA will end, including the State Department's economic assistance. This may result in the collapse of the U.S. tuna fleet and the 27-year-old U.S. South Pacific Tuna Treaty, which has been a cornerstone of commercial support to the Pacific Island Nations.

While the foreign owned canneries in American Samoa are capable of obtaining raw material from their other lower cost operations, vessel owners have no such options. The true impact of this controversy will be felt by the majority of U.S. vessel owners and vessel services in U.S. territories in the Pacific and the Island parties that benefit from those fishing operations.

"The events of last week not only severely impact the lives of our 3,500 crew, officers, support members and family members, but also the thousands more who rely on supply from our fleet in the U.S. and abroad," Hines added. ***(PR)***

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Masons donate to Karidat

JON PEREZ

Emon Lodge No. 179 worshipful master Bong Malasarte and senior steward Wendell Posadas hand over the check to Karidat director Laurie Ogumoro and Typhoon Soudelor volunteer Emy Camacho.

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

A group of Freemasons donated cash to Karidat yesterday for the benefit of those who still need help after the destruction of Typhoon Soudelor.

Emon Lodge No. 179 handed over $500 to Karidat executive director Lauri Ogumoro.

According to Emon Lodge No. 179 worshipful master Romeo "Bong" Malasarte, the donation came from a fellow Mason who heard about their relief operations on Saipan.

"It was given by a visiting brother Mason from New Zealand, Felix Ko from Auckland Lodge 87," Malasarte said. "Ko donated the money that he collected from his Lodge. He just coursed the money through us."

Ko is a former master Mason and was previously connected with the Kasilawana Lodge 77 in the Philippines.

"We decided to give it to Karidat because they still continue to reach out to typhoon victims. Karidat said there are still a lot of people who are in need and that this is a big help for them," Malasarte said.

"We're just continuing to help the community rebuild," he added.

According to Ogumoro, the Masons in the CNMI have been a partner in their outreach efforts.

"The typhoon has affected us all. Emon Lodge has been helping us through the years. Every little donation helps in our recovery efforts," Ogumoro said.

Ogumoro said they are still handing out cash assistance, especially to those who lost a lot.

"We are still distributing donations that came from the mainland since there are still families who have not yet gotten on their feet," Ogumoro said. "We are also getting referrals from the [Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts], who are the people that need help and what kind of assistance they need."

She said the Freemason donation will be used for the Guma Esperanza shelter.

"We did not know that the shelter has insurance, but we're also getting some money for that. FEMA's (Federal Emergency Management Agency) financial assistance will be used for the structure part since the insurance does not cover that," she said. ***(With Jon Perez)***

Navy awards contract for A&E services in Pacific

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM—Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific has awarded Moffatt & Nichol in Honolulu, Hawaii, a maximum amount $20 million indefinite-delivery/ indefinite-quantity contract for architect-engineer services.

The work to be performed provides for the design and engineering services for structural projects in locations predominantly throughout the Pacific. Majority of the work will take place in, but not limited to, Guam, Hawaii, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Some of the work includes execution and delivery of engineering studies; Department of Defense plans, specifications, and cost estimates; functional analysis concept development; as-built drawings; and post-construction award services.

The term of the contract is not to exceed 60 months with an expected completion date of December 2020. No task orders are being issued at this time. This contract was competitively procured via the Federal Business Opportunities website with one proposal received. ***(USN)***

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy 5th wedding anniversary, my love! Enjoy Saipan with the family and I'll see you soon. Merry Christmas and a happy new year to my wife and the family on Saipan. Much love, from Craig Calvo.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

The capture of Ramadi from the Islamic State

If you want to identify a recent low point in the war against the Islamic State, go back to May when the ineffectual Iraqi military cut and ran from Ramadi, a Sunni town just 70 miles west of Baghdad. They abandoned their equipment and fled. The Iraqis "showed no will to fight," U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said.

With that embarrassing defeat, the U.S. strategy for arming and training Iraqi soldiers to defend their country was left exposed as an apparent failure.

Six months later, revived with training, equipment and deadly air support from a U.S.-led coalition, the Iraqi military force found the will and capacity to win. Iraqi troops, bolstered by Sunni tribal fighters, on Monday expelled Islamic State fighters from Ramadi's government center and appeared to be in control of much of the rest of the city.

Now it's the enemy that's falling back, and for the first time the world can contemplate that the tide may finally be turning against the Islamic State, at least in Iraq.

The significance here, beyond a morale-boosting victory, is that Iraqi security forces did the ground fighting themselves, learning how to take on the Islamic State's challenging combination of disciplined fighters and suicide bombers. The U.S. played a big role in support, carrying out more than 630 air strikes in the area in the past six months while providing training, advice and specialized bulldozers and other equipment to clear bombs and booby traps, the Pentagon said.

The Iraqis never should have lost Ramadi, of course, or Fallujah or Mosul, two cities seared in U.S. consciousness as costly battles during the Iraq War. Iraq lost those cities in 2014. Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city and the Islamic State's de facto capital in Iraq, will be particularly difficult to reclaim. But Iraq's military has been bolstered to the point that Mideast experts can envision a fighting force that might be capable of pulling that off.

"I think it will happen," Michael O'Hanlon, a military expert at the Brookings Institution, told *The Wall Street Journal*. "In principle, it's fairly hard for (the Islamic State) to feel good about its position. It's not as if it can hold these cities against the Iraqi army with American air power and other coalition air power."

It's hard to have great confidence in any predictions about the future in this seething region of the world. But for now, the recapture of Ramadi appears to show a remarkable turnaround for an Iraqi army that not long ago looked like one of the most unreliable militaries ever assembled.

Meanwhile, there's Syria, the heart of the Islamic State's self-declared caliphate, riven by a civil war complicated by Russia's efforts to prop up the brutal dictator Bashar Assad. Though the U.N. Security Council this month approved a resolution outlining a peace process for Syria, the U.S. and Russia remain at odds over the future of Assad.

For now, applaud the victory in Ramadi over the Islamic State and hope it holds. There is a long battle to go against a terrorist force that threatens the civilized world.

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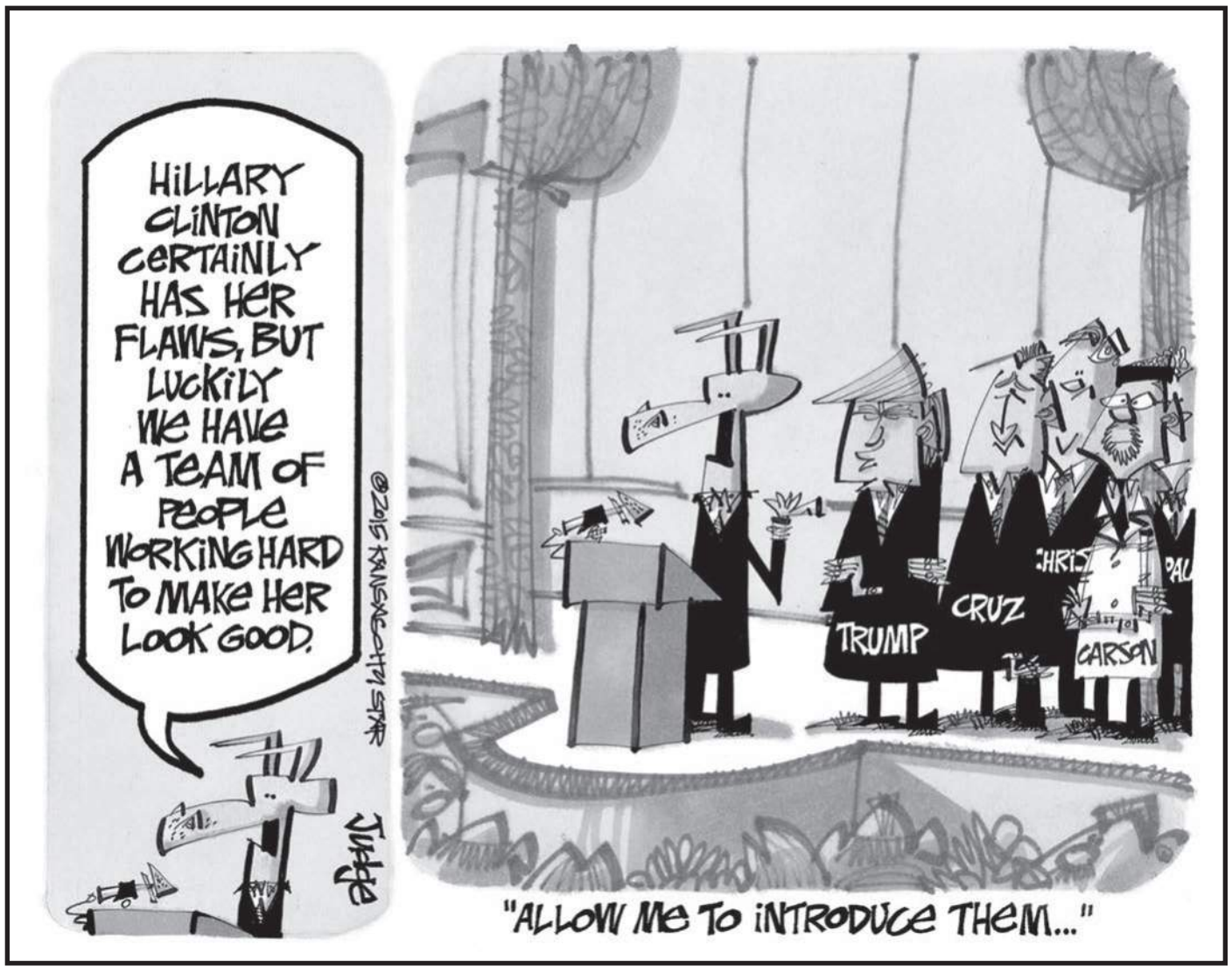

HILLARY CLINTON CERTAINLY HAS HER FLAWS, BUT LUCKILY WE HAVE A TEAM OF PEOPLE WORKING HARD TO MAKE HER LOOK GOOD.
Judge
TRUMP
CRUZ
CARSON
"ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE THEM..."

The year that was

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

We were on five spoonful of yogurt per meal, the *ginamos*/*bagoong* (salted fish) and rice with a dab a lemon once fashionable *poison* in Saigon was good enough for me in mid-December. We skidded on the financial lows for many unexpected reasons.

The year ends with Gov. Eloy Inos finally calling out 10-4. He deserves a full column. Meanwhile, here's how my year ran. Returned to Saipan in March from China to slide into minimum SS benefits, write a book, and in five years, retreat into a decade of the sounds of silence. That timeline followed a different path.

Expectations wilted at the altar of the dollar. I thought I was current on taxes; visited SS to apply for benefits, only to be told that I was three quarters short. I retrieved my SAU copy of consultancy fees and amended my tax returns. That resulted in a big OUCH!—$3K of additional charges. It took me 'til the end of October to finally make the payments but SS did not record the amendment 'til December so benefits won't be accessible 'til the end of January, the earliest.

I dealt with immigration. I came to Saipan a year before and Immigration promised to get all my scattered petition papers to Saipan. Hawaii surprised me with a scheduled interview so I wrote them back saying that I was headed for Saipan to visit the local office where I expected my papers gathered. Not.

An acquaintance says, "The postal service stinks." No quarrel here. The letter I sent from China to Honolulu took four weeks to be delivered so my non-appearance in Hawaii at the scheduled interview cost me. I showed up at the USCIS office on Saipan and was informed that my application was deemed "abandoned." After three months of bantering with Honolulu, the Hawaii office advised that I apply again "without prejudice." I was, of course, expected to dole out the application fees again. That's another $3K ouch.

The petition for non-quota relatives that normally takes three months took six. The Immigration officer advised I file simultaneously for the immigration petition and change of status while my spouse and son were with me on Saipan but I did not have sufficient funds and the blunder of filing separately cost me mucho as well.

Meanwhile, on income-generation, I got back to PSS. I left with a diagnosed cervical bone disorder while teaching at SVES, and two MDs counseled surgery on nerve cells but I demurred, withdrew retirement funds, sought medical relief elsewhere. Though diagnosed with a disability, I could not claim disability benefits because I successfully managed it. Bummer!

This year, I applied to teach social studies and history at SSHS; looked forward to jostle academically with students again. PSS central qualified me to teach. I interviewed and waited for the call. It never came. Hiring is by request of the school and my name was on the available teachers' list, but no one asked for my services. Talk about a real downer!

I interviewed elsewhere. Three out of five thought I was "over qualified," a great mental massage but not helpful in procuring groceries. At an education institution as adjunct faculty, my credentials needed to be assessed by a third party since the degree that qualified me for a position was earned outside the U.S., never mind that my subsequent masters' level work was in a prestigious American university. The requirement is a rule. I do not quibble with official regulations.

A friend in volunteer disaster assistance after Soudelor thought volunteers from China could spruce up on their English so I expected groups of 10 folks to trek to my office to take two-hour daily lessons. The remuneration was on the low side but the numbers still brought funds that I desperately needed to keep roof over my head and food on the table. The first session turned out to be a total disaster. The organizer kept translating my English into Chinese and when I asked him to stop, he abruptly canceled the class before the hour was over, saying that they needed a Caucasian who spoke real English! Stupefied, I was back to counting pennies for roof and groceries.

I picked the above narratives because they were manageable. Want to hear the less than friendly breaks? My early morning flight to China was transferred to daylight due to busted lights. I was told to check in two and a half hours before departure, an exercise in relativity and chaos. The airport was jammed.

Immigration finally responded to the change of status application for my wife and son. My son's first papers were submitted before he turned 21 but got caught in P.O. delays. Now he is over 21, and will be treated as such. He has to fall in line for a number.

The year saw expenses grow faster than income. I was broke and deep in debt. A Mickey D's cup that said "half full or half empty" provided class lesson. The cup made a lesson on the difference a choice on outlook makes. Perspective determines behavior.

In my book, Eloy Inos was half-full. T'was a very good year.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Hinanau Sakan 2015

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.*

Gi hiniyuñg este na sakan tana`e mit grasias i Saina pot todu bendision-ta. Puede hana`e hit minetgot yan minesñgon-ta para ta aregla ha`anita gi nuebu na sakan. Mampos abarambau finapos-ta na biahe mina presisu na tafan daña ya hita ta aregla futtuna-ta.

Naturat ta abiba dinaña familia `nai ta limienda tatte i pegsi` mañge` yan ma`ug na amesta. Maseha gi hilu` dididi` na tininon katne lau estaya ta pega mona inatisan inafamauleg gi entre membron familia. Este na dinaña` si nana yan tata umestablese yan sumimientu gi halom famaguon niha. Mauleg na tradision familian natibu.

Gi halom dinaña `nai tali`e mañaina-ta na esta man-tufai lau gagaige ha` ayu na chaleg i kumonfitma satton na dinisehan niha na u felis todu haf` ta petsisige. Este na diniseha fitme giya siha esta i uttimu. Huñgan, i anaku` lokue` na finaposta hana` la anchu pinasensia yan hinimidde-ta. Kumeke ileghu esta man-ginen ayu hit na hogsu`.

Asunton 2016

Guaha siha `nos kuantos problema-ta gi hinalom nuebu na sakan. Makat na asuntu pot rason na todu numesessita dañkulu na fondu gi satbasion operasion gobietnu. Siempre umachalapon i chinatsaga guatu gi kinalamten familia.

`An tana` fan daña obligasion yan dibi `nai mas klaru kuantu tinahoñgña hinanau 2016. I mapega kumu moneda para este na sakan ennau i $145 miyon pesus. Na suha 80 pot sientu para sueddon empleau yan 25 pot sientu para i PSS. Taya` sopbla para otru obigasion siha.

I mafanana`an "unfunded liability" (dibin gobietnu gi programan man-ritirau) ennau i $789 miyon pesus. Na pinalo`pu` ni mas ke $30 miyon dibin gobietnu gi CUC, dibin CUC gi CDA $50 miyon pesus, $45 miyon pesus para pagamientun man-rirtirau yan otru siha obligasion.

Haf` na kada ratu hu tuka este? Ti umahñau na `nai apenas fondu siempre ha luñu` operasion gobietnu. Este na chinatsaga ti umahñau siempre ha palala`e todu piot i kualidat linala` gi kada famiia gi señgsoñg siha. Estague` dañkulu chathinassog-hu ya puede i mansabiun I Deni man-preparau para uma-adelanta ekonomian i tanu` ensegidas.

Tafan Magof Todus

Lamona gi misan gayu siempre ta kanta (gi mañgiñge` Niño) Tafan Magof Todus. Man-adiseha hit dinuebu gi hinalom sakan 2016! Bonitu na kanta ni kumonfitma sensian inafamauleg gi entalo` todu.

Gi mismu sunidu ta gagau i Saina yine`ase`, tana`e bendision i manhanau yan ayu lokue` seha kassu man-matai gi nuebu na sakan. Dispues, man-esalau ta`lu tafan magof todus! Esta na`fugu na sunidu. Guaha esta nina` fantutuhu` lagu` niha. Tafan man-gagau lokue` minesñgon-ta para maseha haf` na mattiru.

Dispues de misa, kase guaha para dinaña` familia `sino man-atuñgu`. Gi katkuet okasion, yangin guaha usun maneska na seguru na guaha para un` sinegune ni karetamu tatte giya hamyu. Bula siempre usun maneska `nai i man-bastus libianu che`chu` bulacheru gi chalan publiku.

Agradesimientu

Tanana`e lokue` mit grasias ayu siha na bisnis i man-manna`e ayudu para i mas man-chatsaga na tautau-ta. Hana`e minagof, piot famaguon niha, umabiba finatton i Niño pa`gu na Noche Buena giya siha. Felis Noche Buena!

Hu dimemoria pinepble kulan tatten patman kanaihu. Ennau na chalan `nai malofan-yu` antes gi pinatgon-hu. Lau esta namanman na tatfoi dinidog man-taya` mame, mañgontentu ham ni haf` guaha yan motmut minagof gi halom todu mattiru. Ni unu sumeha!

Dañkulu na sapet pumalo`pu` Saipan guihe na tiempu gi tutuhon 1960 na sakan. Guiya este hiniyuñg Navy guine. I tinilaika mampos na aminasu deste cho`chu` esta tatte gi gualu`. Dios mihu na mattirun familia.

Pot Chaleg

Estague` na tiempu `nai namase` i man-daibites sa` ti man-obra sumumuke siha. Guaha ha` bumatbaruye lau dispues makone` para i hospitat sa` abarambau todu sistemaña ni manadan asiga, asukat yan mantika. Dios mihu!

Huli`e` todu klasen gupot entalu` Amerikanu, Chinu, Koreanu, Japones yan gi fina` isla. Tai atparehu gipot Chamorro. Paire sentadaña. Todu i chumage mañgonfotme na paire! Kasi i sentada-ta lokue` umatitisa i mafanana`an chetnot familia—daibites.

Mampos mi-asidu sentada-ta. Estague` umaminasa parahiya-ta. Gigon fatsu, man-sulun hit halom gi chetnot daibites. I para ta korihe sumuhaye daibites dañkulu na sakrifisiu debi ta chogue sin ditension. Gaige i kustumbren sentada ni debi tatulaika. Sin este pues siempre gigon tagacha` kuarenta (40) años esta hit man-listu manmarelistra gi butai` daibites.

I tinilaika gi sentada-ta siña ta tutuhon adumididi`. Mauleg ta tutuhon gi malimitten kantidan neñkanu` ni takakanu`. Pega ennau gi sisienta pot sientu (60%) yas un` sede estomagumu kalamten regulatmiente. Este na inadahe mas libianu yan homlu` sa` tita estotba fuñgsion parahiya-ta.

■■■

Mattu un` oga`an Dameñgo si nanan mame ya ma-maisen kau manhosme misa ham. Ineppe ni un` chetluhu, "Hu manau-yu` para i gima Yuus gi oran `las tres gi chatanmag ya mahuhuchum". Diberas `nai ha hakot i biha i tegpuñg eskoba ha chalapon ham todu. Tatnai mauleg ineppen pitbetserias. Dios mihu!

An open letter to the people of the Commonwealth

By JOHN RIEGEL
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

As I look back on 2015 I realize that this past year has been the most challenging in my 30-year career. There have been the many infrastructure improvement projects and the new developments, the challenges of finding and stopping leaks in an aging water system, and the limited funding available for improvements. Then, in July 2015, Alan Fletcher vacated the executive director position and the board appointed me as the acting executive director. I worked with a larger group of individuals both within and external to CUC. Everyone was fantastic. I am grateful to the board for having confidence in me to do the job.

In August, Typhoon Soudelor passed over us and left a giant mess. Thankfully injury to people was very low. Our homes and water and power infrastructure were not as fortunate—they were massively devastated. Why the typhoon came within a month of serving as acting executive director I will never know, but I am pleased that I was able to do my part to help the residents of Saipan in the aftermath of the typhoon. I was fortunate to have a great staff to work with through it all. I am grateful to the residents and businesses and governing agencies for their tremendous patience, fortitude, assistance, and support. We owe a great thanks to all the responders who came to our aid: our sister island utilities, federal officials, such as the Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA, CNMI legislators, Emergency Management Office, and the businesses that extended their appreciation to CUC many times in many ways. I thank you.

My appointment as acting executive director terminated on Dec. 13, 2015. During my time as acting executive director, I had the pleasure of meeting and interacting with all of CUC—the call center, FAM, power plant operators, T&D, human resources, warehouse staff, along with my regular interaction with procurement, accounting, IT, engineering, water and wastewater operations, administration, payroll, and legal counsel. It was a pleasure and an honor to work with everyone at CUC. Though CUC has its struggles and its challenges, I can attest that all the CUC employees with whom I have worked with are professional, dedicated to their jobs, committed to the mission of CUC, and they genuinely care about providing good service to CUC customers. This was especially apparent in the days and months following Soudelor. Every CUC employee rose to the immense task of restoring water, power, and wastewater services. CUC employees did not tire in the goal to restore services as quickly as possible. Despite the hot sun beating down on the linemen; despite the dirty, hot, and noisy working conditions at the power plant; despite trudging through the treacherous jungle looking for water line breaks; despite the difficulty of operating many lift stations with a portable generator; despite the hundreds of requisitions to buy materials and services; despite functioning with sparse funds; despite the handling of thousands of calls; despite the increased load of accounting huge numbers of expenditures and shipments; despite the logistics of coordinating the arrival, lodging, and return of dozens of visiting utility workers to assist CUC; despite the orchestration of the delivery of unprecedented purchases of power poles, transformers, and trucks; despite the long, long days of what first seemed like endless recovery, your CUC workers shined. Your CUC workers did not fade; they did not complain, they did not stop until the systems were repaired, functional, and dependable again. This they did for the good of the community, this they did for the residents of Saipan. CUC employees did their jobs with pride, honor, and expertise. It is true that there are still problem areas and CUC still has more restoration to do, and the water system continues to experience upsets and interruptions in providing water, but the utility faces a long list of deficiencies due to the age of the majority of the infrastructure.

Without the help of all the federal agencies, without the support of all the responders, our recovery task would have been monumental and would have taken years to complete. CUC and the residents of Saipan surely acknowledge the significant contributions by the federal government and all the neighboring island utilities. We owe great thanks to them. Moving forward, with the financial aid of FEMA and EPA and other funding agencies, CUC is able to design and construct new facilities piece by piece to make the water system, sewer system, power distribution system, and the power plant, better. I thank the lieutenant governor and all the local legislators for their support during my time as acting executive director.

We have all weathered a terrible and intense storm together, and dug out from the ravages of the storm as a community with distinction. I am incredibly proud of all CUC employees and am honored to have served as acting executive director through it all. Never have I seen such dedication and hard work for such an extended length of time as I have witnessed in each and every CUC employee throughout the recovery and restoration.

I want to express my appreciation and thanks to the businesses and residents of Saipan for your support, for your patience (I know it was not easy to be without power and water), for your understanding, and for your supreme resiliency. I thank the members of the press and my PIO for disseminating information throughout the year. Even though I am no longer the acting executive director of CUC, I will always remember my experiences in that role. I will continue to be your CUC chief engineer and serve the community of Saipan in that capacity.

Thank you again, Saipan. I wish you all a joyous Christmas season, and I hope for a prosperous year ahead, free of typhoons, if possible!

John Riegel is chief engineer of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and is a former acting executive director of the utilities agency.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A New Year's resolution

With the New Year just around the corner, it comes with promises we make to ourselves to improve our lives. It is with that idea in mind that January is National Healthy Weight Awareness Month and we should all know the importance of physical fitness. Our islands have seen an increase in non-communicable diseases, or NCDs, especially among our youth. NCDs were responsible 60 percent of deaths in the CNMI in 2005.

NCDs include Type II diabetes, which are preventable. Since 2009, Type II diabetes has been defined as a disability under federal law, because it substantially limits the function of the endocrine system, which regulates insulin and blood glucose (sugar). According to the U.S. Public Health Service, we can reduce the risk of Type II diabetes through a minimum of 120-150 minutes of exercise per week. That's only 30 minutes of walking or doing light yard work per day.

Other NCDs that we can prevent are raised blood pressure and obesity. In addition to 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week, limiting tobacco use and alcohol intake will help lower blood pressure and control body weight.

For those of us who are not willing or unable to go an entire month, let's focus on Jan. 19-25, 2016, as part of Healthy Weight Week, which is "all about encouraging people to stop dieting and pursue livable and sustainable healthy lifestyles through eating well, living actively and feeling good about themselves" (*Green Mountain at Fox Run*).

For more information about non-communicable diseases and/or disabilities, please contact the Northern Marianas Protection & Advocacy Systems, Inc (NMPASI) at 235-7273/4, or visit us online at www.nmpasi.org.

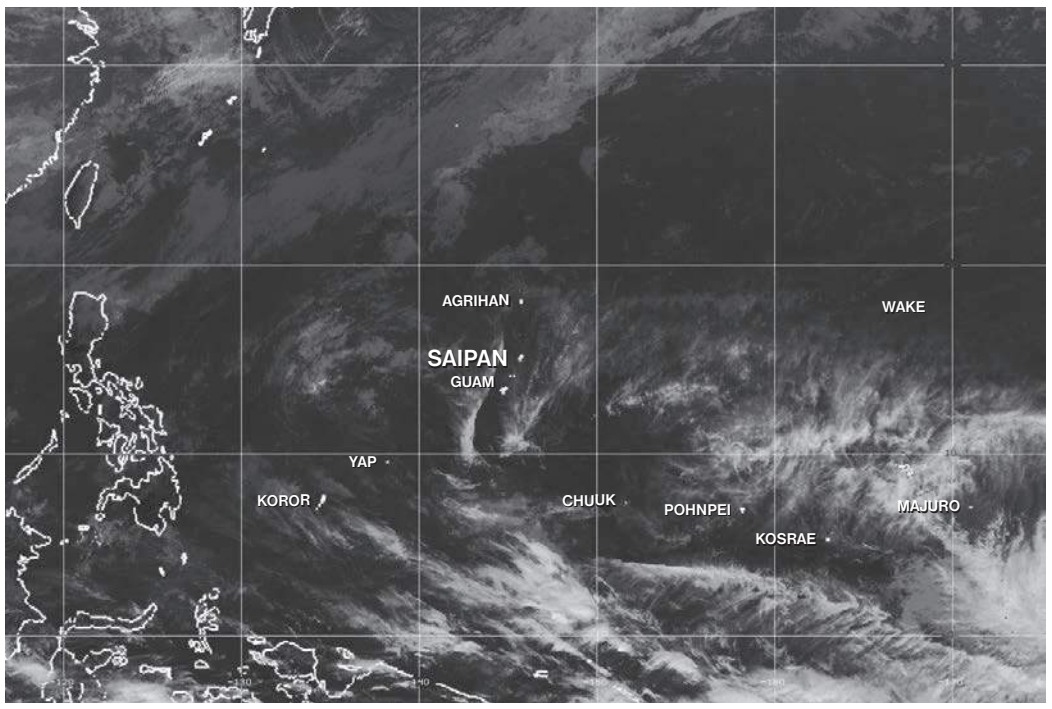
Greg Borja
Projects Specialist, NMPASI

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front runs southwestward from northeast of Iwo To island through 25N142E to beyond 130E at 22N. Cloudiness and rain are seen along and up to 220 miles northwest of this boundary. Two trade-wind disturbances are producing scattered showers north of Yap between 13N and 18N from 131E to 137E and within 40 miles of a line from 15N137E to 15N144E. Similar conditions are also found northwest of Koror between 7N and 11N from 131E to 133E. A near-equatorial trough extends eastward from south of Mindanao through 2N130E to a tropical disturbance centered southeast of Majuro near EQ180. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are present north of the trough southwest of Chuuk within 100 miles of a line from 9N142E to EQ149E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are evident near the disturbance south of a line from 2N171E to 7N180.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼77
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲85	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲87	▼78
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲84	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲78	▼63
Beijing	Sunny	▲41	▼20
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲64	▼59
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲84	▼71
London	Showers	▲55	▼44
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲61	▼40
Manila	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼71
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲96	▼69
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼75
New York	Rain	▲53	▼44
Osaka	Sunny	▲52	▼37
Paris	Fog	▲50	▼45
Pusan	Sunny	▲49	▼35
Rome	Sunny	▲57	▼40
Salem	Showers	▲44	▼32
San Francisco	Sunny	▲54	▼43
Seoul	Showers	▲45	▼28
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲50	▼39
Washington, DC	Rain	▲63	▼46

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:47 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.1 Feet
11:40 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
5:50 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
10:23 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Thursday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	10:15 PM	10:09 AM
Thursday	11:03 PM	10:50 AM
Friday	11:50 PM	11:28 AM
Saturday		12:06 PM
Sunday	12:36 AM	12:45 PM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

PCF Hawaii educational mission: One for the ages

MARIANAS MATTERS

By MUFI HANNEMANN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Mufi Hannemann is a Harvard-educated former mayor of Honolulu. He is the principal of MFH Enterprises and is the chair and founder of the Pacific Century Fellows program.

First of a two-part series

One of the special and unique features of being part of the Pacific Century Fellows program is an opportunity to visit Guam and Hawaii on an educational mission in which key meetings with senior officials representing government, the military, academia, and the private sector are arranged—all designed to enhance the Fellows' knowledge and understanding of priority issues of these areas. Of course, the added benefit of establishing new contacts and developing new friendships are a real plus.

Guam took place in late June, which included members of the inaugural 2014 Fellows class since that was not part of their calendar year. Some of the highlights of the two-day excursion there included meetings with Lt. Gov. Ray Tenorio and the Speaker of the House Judith Won Pat in which they were impressive in their Q-and-A potion with the Fellows, a detailed tourism briefing by the Guam Visitors Bureau chair Mark Baldyga, an extensive military tour and discussion, a networking opportunity as special guests at a Guam Chamber of Commerce luncheon and dinner with Sir Deryck Maughan, an international business and finance expert who, having worked extensively in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, gave the Fellows his perspective on the future of the American and Chinese economic and political relationship and its impact on the rest of the world.

Hawaii was an intensive three-and-a-half-day schedule grind that had the Fellows traipsing through the North Shore of Oahu, Kapolei, Pearl Harbor, Kalihi, Sand Island, Manoa, Kaimuki, Diamond Head, Ala Moana and Waikiki for their sessions and tours. In putting together the schedule, I wanted to not only expose the Fellows to the serious aspects of life in Hawaii and the issues that are top of the mind but also wanted to make sure that culture, foodie, fun and entertainment would also be a part of their Hawaiian experience.

Day one had the Fellows heading to University of Hawaii Manoa where they met with Chancellor Robert Bley-Vroman who gave them an overview of the state's largest university and its present and future challenges. He acknowledged UH's interest in Pacific-Asian affairs and saw it as a mutually beneficial endeavor and the Fellows asked several thought provoking questions. Next was a visit to Pearl Harbor PACFLT where they received a Pacific Command briefing of U.S. strategic and military interests in the region including Guam and the CNMI and got a personal tour of the USS *Chosin*, a Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser docked at Pearl Harbor. Then it was off to Kapolei through the former sugar plantation town of Waipahu for lunch as it gave them an opportunity to see firsthand the construction of the largest capital improvement project in the history of Hawaii—the $8 billion rail system. At Kapolei Hale, an official with the HART (Honolulu Authority on Rapid Transit) provided an informative briefing on a project that has been nearly five decades in the making and were informed on how it will transform the quality of life for Honolulu residents for generations to come. Wrapping up the initial day was a trek back to a town called Kalihi just west of the airport where they received a private tour of the Bishop Museum—the state's most prestigious and largest private museum with an unmatched collection of art and artifacts from Hawaii and Oceania. Currently on exhibit is a special tribute to one of Hawaii's all-time greatest ambassadors, Duke Kahanamoku, the father of modern surfing that the Fellows enjoyed immensely. At this stop they were joined by the present 15th class of Hawaii Pacific Century Fellows on the tour and who were part of the welcoming dinner reception that evening at the museum. The Hawaiian catered dinner by Highway Inn featured a laulau (pork baked in taro leaves) that had some of the Fellows craving for more. Interestingly, both Blair Collis, CEO of the Museum, and Monica Toguchi, owner of the restaurant, are also products of the PCF Hawaii program and were all too happy to be in attendance to extend their personal greetings and aloha to the Fellows.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members of the 2015 Pacific Century Fellows Marianas Chapter are joined by the present 15th class of Hawaii Pacific Century Fellows on a tour of the Bishop Museum.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members of the 2015 Pacific Century Fellows join PCF founder Mufi Hannemann and PCF Marianas chair Jerry Tan during a visit to the Bishop Museum, Hawaii's most prestigious and largest private museum with an unmatched collection of art and artifacts from Hawaii and Oceania.

The second day was a breakfast with First Hawaiian Bank executives at their impressive downtown headquarters. Hosted by president Eric Yeaman and vice chairman Ray Ono, whose responsibilities include being in charge of the Saipan and Guam branches of the bank, the duo was joined by a PCF Hawaii alum, senior vice president Neil Char. The trio spent an extraordinary amount of time sharing their leadership style, the bank's much admired philosophy of its emphasis on a family-like corporate culture and FHB's plans to remain committed to doing and expanding business in the Marianas region. The latter was obviously well received by the Fellows. Next up was a tour and visit to Kaimuki High School that boasts the largest Micronesian population in their student body in Hawaii. Its creative and energetic principal, Wade Araki, visited Saipan last year to talk to the 2014 class and has developed quite a reputation for developing a curriculum that specializes in having his students "college-, career- and citizenship-ready" by the time they graduate. By incorporating a college pathways system with Kapiolani Community College, attendance, grades and test scores have improved and morale amongst students, faculty and staff are at an all-time high. A 10-minute ride to the slopes of Diamond Head took them to the Pacific HQ of the American Red Cross, whose jurisdiction includes CNMI and Guam. Fresh from their experience with Typhoon Soudelor, the Fellows were able to offer their insights and perspective besides expressing their appreciation to the Red Cross for their assistance with the recovery efforts on Saipan. Waikiki and Hawaii's vaunted visitor industry was the focal point of the Fellows orientation for the rest of the afternoon. Two more PCF Hawaii alums led the discussion: Daniel Nahoopii, the director of tourism research of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, and Kaiwi Yoon, chief of the architectural branch of the state's Department of Land and Natural Resources. Together they provided an excellent briefing on tourism from a marketing and cultural standpoint. Nahoopii also shared data and statistics of Hawaii's international tourism arrivals, which drew interest from the Fellows given the parallel marketing focus of MVA on the Chinese, Korean and Japanese visitors as well. Last activity of the day was from Rick Egged, the president of the Waikiki Improvement Association, who led a trolley ride tour of Waikiki where the Fellows got to witness first hand the pivotal role of 2 square miles (the size of Waikiki) to the state's $14-billion-dollar industry. Egged, who like Araki spoke to the inaugural class of Fellows on Saipan, provided expert commentary and insight.

To be continued.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

On the occasion of the passing of Rota's son

Strange for the local media's lack of scrutiny on candidates for public office last November for the office of governor and lieutenant governor, for example, to now be the first to throw stone on the glasshouse in reference to the op-ed piece: "The governor and some questions of succession," appearing on *Tribune*'s Nov. 16, 2015. I find this anomaly ironic, because the role of the media in any open democratic society is to be an independent voice of and for the people, especially when dealing with holders of public office.

Well, the local media failed—both *Variety* and *Tribune*—and here the *Tribune*'s article served in reminding us of about our ailing commander-in-chief (as if we are so oblivious of current events) that the media perhaps hinted as an incursion to democracy and definitely not in keeping with effective governance.

For now, this is what I will say of former governor Inos on the occasion of his untimely passing: Eloy was a good man. Eloy may not be a Knights of Columbus member, but he was a decent and a generous Catholic. Eloy was also an intelligent person—a very experienced individual and quick wit in public finance. He was personable, and sincere in every letter of the word, and called spade a spade with humility as he saw it—and yes, with little fanfare or "BS." Eloy was my kind of guy. It was because of Eloy that I cast my vote of confidence as I did last November, knowing how motivated he was to take care of his health and resume his normal duties as governor. Motivated he was, dedicated to the end was self-evident, but failed to understand his limits to office, nonetheless.

Every precious moment of man's life on this earth must serve God and make good of God's gift of life. Governor Inos did. And he continued to make good, even as he was convalescing off island.

Eloy took very good care of his wife during her own struggle with her own health, and Eloy did the same good deeds for his family on Saipan and Rota, including his many good friends and a few not so good friends.

It is time for the good Governor Inos to be remembered best as the statesman that he was to the extent life's gifts allowed him to. May Eloy forever rest in peace as his fellow earthlings will now have to deal with the leadership vacuum left by his sudden passing. Out of deference to Governor Inos, we shall debate the constitutional mandate on his successor at a later time. For now, godspeed ol' warrior, Luta's first governor—a man we all consider a friend even when he clung so tenaciously to life from his life threatening surgery. He made a promise to God to choose life, but God needed him to be near Him for reasons only He knows.

Juan C. Dela Cruz
San Roque, Saipan

BETTER

From Page 1

and director back in the day. He has a legacy of service to the people of the Commonwealth," San Nicolas said.

For him, it was an honor serving with the man he thought of as "caring and giving."

"I always remember him as a caring and giving man who to the end fought for the people of the Commonwealth. He is a true statesman, a servant of the people, and I'm proud to serve under him," San Nicolas said.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, who knew Inos since they were kids, said he will surely miss the late governor.

"It's a very sad day for us here in the Commonwealth. I knew the late governor for a long time. We're related. We went to school in the first and second grade together. He's also my previous boss as the director of finance. He's a good man, very good man. We will miss him," Apatang said.

Asked how he would remember Inos as a leader, Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig said Inos' trademark was that he was "very passionate for the people."

In a statement, the CNMI Judiciary said it joins the Commonwealth in mourning the passing of Inos. "Throughout his years as a public servant and leader, Gov. Inos exemplified an enduring compassion for the Commonwealth and its people. His life's work benefited so many, and his approachable style of leadership will be greatly missed."

"This is a very sad day because we have lost a good friend and leader," Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro said. "On behalf of the Judiciary, I extend our heartfelt condolences to Gov. Inos' family during this difficult time of grief."

For the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, Inos was a leader who was accommodating and strived for fairness.

"The hotel association has worked with him since 2013 when he was coming in after Fitial. He's always been very receptive to us. He's always made sure that he gives us his time and we'd like to thank him for that. He's always strived to be fair," HANMI chair Gloria Cavanagh said.

"We're sending our condolences to the family. For the CNMI, it's a sad day. He always had a strong presence in the CNMI even during his illness," she added.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Alex Sablan said his memory of Inos would be of how he worked on the issues affecting the CNMI with great leadership.

"We lost one of the greatest leaders of our time as he gave everything he had to the Commonwealth. It is truly a sad day for all the citizens of the CNMI," Sablan said.

For Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña, it was an honor to serve with the late governor especially with his vision for healthcare in the CNMI.

"So honored to work under him. I will miss listening to him and coming to him for guidance and leadership as he always articulates a vision for CHCC that ensures health equity for the people of the Commonwealth. I certainly will miss my conversations with this great human being and leader," Muña said.

Inos was also a "very good boss," according to the CNMI Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army Viola Alepuyo.

"Gov. Inos was a very intelligent man. He was very compassionate and he cared for the CNMI," Alepuyo said. "Whenever we work together, he'll always challenge us. He'll always ask us to put things into a spreadsheet and once you get that spreadsheet, you better be able to answer every question because he will have a lot of questions. So he was always pushing for the benefit of the CNMI."

Despite his powerful position, Inos was also seen as someone "very human."

"Knowing him goes back a long way. I love the man. He's very human; he listens to all our problems. He's taken away from us but his memories will leave on," Saipan Seniors Advisory Council president Maria Salinas said.

Inos was also described as "an icon in the community" who everybody loved.

"Through the years he supported me in all of my projects from the Troops To Teachers to Operation Homefront Support to working on projects in the CNMI. He has been a strong supporter of all my projects through the years. He's a very compassionate, very loving and caring person," Geri Willis said.

Willis said Inos, whom she remembers as a "vibrant man," will be sorely missed.

CNMI Commonwealth Advocates for Recovery Efforts director Jenny Hegland said she has deep gratitude for the Inos' service.

"I never had a chance to know you well, but I promise we will honor your memory by working even harder to restore the beautiful community you loved and led. May you rest in peace," Hegland said in her message to Inos.

The Filipino community also mourned the passing of Inos as they "lost a very dear friend and ardent supporter of the Filipino community far too soon."

"Throughout the more than three decades that the late Gov. Inos has dedicated his life, both in the private and government sectors, he has won the hearts of our community, to include our Filipino brothers and sisters who found the CNMI our second home," said Philippine honorary consul to the CNMI Glicerio Arago.

"And with sorrow, I, on behalf of the Honorary Philippine Consular Office to the CNMI and the CNMI Filipino community, extend our profound and heartfelt condolences to his family and relatives. We also join the rest of the Commonwealth, as well as the hearts of all those he touched and worked with during this very difficult time," he added.

United Filipino Organization president Bong Malasarte said: "On behalf of the UFO, we are sending our condolences to his family. We all know he has done a lot of good things for the CNMI and we hope that his successor will do more for the CNMI."

Inos' passing was also a big loss to the Japanese community.

"I heard the sudden passing of Honorable Gov. Eloy Inos with deep shock and sorrow. Under his great leadership I expected that the current friendly relationship between [the] CNMI and Japan would further grow. So, it is really a big loss for this relationship. I hereby express my sympathy and condolences to his bereaved family," said Japanese Consul Hitoshi Kikuchi.

After his initial years of serving the public, Inos came out of retirement in 1994 to join the Tan Holdings Corp. under the Century Group of Companies where he served as president for three years.

Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan described Inos as very hardworking and honest and fair, especially in making decisions.

"He is a very hardworking individual—always the first to arrive and the last to leave his workplace. There was no weekends or holidays for him, always working 24/7," Tan said.

"He was very good at analyzing financial numbers, and was a highly qualified Finance director under different CNMI government administrations. That same qualification probably makes him one of our best CNMI governor ever, especially dealing with the annual government budget, which is always challenging," he added.

Tan said that Inos, who became a close friend of the Tan family, will be missed.

"As his friend, a former colleague, also having been part of my family, and now being our governor, I will miss him dearly," Tan said.

New administration

Following Inos' untimely passing, constituents and community leaders wished the new governor, Ralph DLG Torres, the best of luck as he takes over the reins of government.

"Under the circumstances, it's not the happiest way of walking into the office but we believe that they know and understand the responsibilities dealing with the office and we hope for the best for the remaining three years of the term," HANMI's Cavanagh said.

"I want to congratulate the new governor and lieutenant governor. We look forward to continue working with them," Apatang said. "We always worked together in the past and we hope to continue that."

Atalig believes the new Torres administration will continue Inos' leadership and his command for the people of the Marianas.

"We're seeing a revival in our economy so I'm hoping that that trend continues," Alepuyo said.

"Prayers and condolences to the family of Inos and also prayers to the lieutenant governor Ralph Torres and the future of the CNMI," Willis said.

The staff, management, and owners of Pacific Islands Club, Saipan would like to express heartfelt condolences to the family of the late

Honorable Governor Eloy S. Inos.

We are saddened to hear the loss of a very respectable leader.
Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.
May peace and comfort find all grieving hearts during this difficult time.

PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

Business

Fitbit likely a hot seller for Christmas

NEW YORK (AP)—It was a very merry Christmas for fitness-tracking device maker Fitbit. The company's app was the most downloaded on Apple's app store Christmas Day, a sign that many people couldn't wait to set up their Fitbit trackers after unwrapping them. It also suggests that Fitbit trackers were a hot seller during the holidays, despite increasing competition from Apple's smartwatch and other wearable devices. Investors were pleased, sending shares of the San Francisco company higher Monday.

The Fitbit app topped Apple's app store in the U.S. on Christmas Day and the day after, according App Annie, which tracks app downloads and rankings. That's far better than last year when the Fitbit app ranked at No. 18 on Christmas Day and No. 15 the day after, according to research from Raymond James & Associates. In a note to clients, Raymond James analyst Tavis McCourt called the numbers "impressive."

Fitbit declined to comment Monday. Apple did not respond to a request for comment.

AP

In a Thursday, June 18, 2015 file photo, Fitbit CEO James Park shows off one of his devices as he poses for photos outside the New York Stock Exchange, before his company's IPO.

While app downloads don't necessarily mean a tracker was sold, McCourt said it's a "good measure of relative sales success."

Retailers confirmed Monday that Fitbit trackers were in high demand during the holiday shopping season.

Macy's Inc. said the Fitbit's products sold "very well" at the department store. Discount retailer Target Corp. said the trackers were one of its top-selling electronics during the holiday season. And Amazon.com Inc. said the Fitbit Charge was one of its most popular items for customers that used its same-day delivery service in Chicago, Dallas, New York and other major cities.

App downloads could also lead to future sales. Users who track their health information on the app are more likely to buy another Fitbit device when they want to upgrade, said Ross Rubin, the senior director of industry analysis at App Annie.

Health law reporting extension issued for employers

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Treasury Department on Monday gave employers an extension of critical reporting requirements, as it seeks to manage some of the most complicated parts of the federal health care law.

Employers had previously faced deadlines in February and March to report 2015 health insurance information to their employees, and also to the IRS.

If they need more time, employers can now have until March 31 to get information to their workers and until June 30 in certain cases to get details to the IRS.

Treasury said it acted after many employers complained they might not be able to get the information processed in time. Companies that rely on outside vendors were running into a bottleneck.

"It's a limited extension to make the system work as smoothly as possible," said Treasury senior adviser Mark Iwry. The extension also applies to health insurance companies facing similar reporting requirements.

The information is needed to enforce the health law's requirement that individuals carry insurance, to administer its subsidies for premiums and to apply its requirement that larger employers offer coverage. Employers and insurers are filing the annual reports for the first time, as required by the health law.

President Barack Obama's health care overhaul joined health insurance and taxes, two of the most complicated areas for consumers and employers alike.

The law's penalties for people who go without health insurance are administered through the income tax system, as are its subsidies to people who qualify for assistance with their premiums. Penalties for larger companies that fail to provide coverage are also assessed through taxes.

The requirement for employers with 50 or more workers to offer coverage or face fines has been delayed twice. It takes effect Jan. 1 for companies with 50-99 employees. Companies with 100 or more workers faced the requirement starting this year, after an initial postponement of a year.

New England lobstermen still fishing thanks to mild winter

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—Many New England lobstermen are still fishing deep into December this year because of unseasonably warm weather and an abundance of the critters, and Maine's beloved scallops are a little harder to come by as a result.

The extra fishing hasn't done much to change the price of lobsters, which are selling in the range of $8 to $10 per pound in Maine, typical for this time of year, when Canada is also hauling in large catches. But some lobstermen in Maine, the biggest lobster-producing state, also fish for scallops and haven't made the transition to the winter scalloping season because lobster fishing is still strong.

As a result, Maine scallops—which usually cost about $20 per pound—have been slightly more expensive, sometimes selling in the $25-per-pound range, and some retailers are low on supply. Alex Todd, a Portland scallop and lobster fisherman, said he expects scallop fishing in the southern part of the state to pick up in mid-January. Supply from scallop-rich Cobscook Bay is helping feed demand for now, he said.

"There's not very many being landed right here in Casco Bay," said Todd, who is still fishing for lobsters.

Lobster fishing off New England peaks in the summer, and the fleet typically reduces to a few hardy souls when the cold months arrive. But more boats than usual are still on the water this year because conditions remain good, fishermen and dealers said. Temperatures were expected to remain above average in much of New England on Monday.

Rockland, Maine, lobster dealer Jamie Steeves said there has been no trouble selling the extra catch, and he suspects some will end up on tables for holiday celebrations.

"Everyone's doing well right now. There's a lot of bugs around," Steeves said, using a colloquial term for lobsters. "The weather has been good. It absolutely has affected the industry by letting people get out more."

Nation

Calm urged after Ohio grand jury doesn't indict officers

CLEVELAND (AP)—Officials are urging calm as they brace for expected protests after a grand jury voted not to indict a white Cleveland police officer for fatally shooting a 12-year-old black boy who was carrying what turned out to be a pellet gun.

Small groups of protesters gathered Monday outside the Cuyahoga County Justice Center and at the recreation center where Tamir Rice was shot by then-rookie patrolman Timothy Loehmann in November 2014. The size of those protests likely was reduced by a cold and steady rain that fell throughout the day.

County Prosecutor Tim McGinty announced that Loehmann and his field training officer wouldn't be indicted because of "indisputable" evidence that Tamir was reaching for what officers thought was a real gun tucked in his waistband, and urged those who disagreed with the grand jury to protest peacefully.

"It is time for the community and all of us to start to heal," McGinty said.

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson made a similar plea, as did Tamir's family. Attorneys for the family condemned the grand jury's decision but called on people to express themselves "peacefully and democratically." Deputies set up metal barricades outside the Justice Center after McGinty's news conference on Monday afternoon.

Outside the recreation center, protesters chanted, "No justice, no peace!"

Cleveland resident Art Blakey held a sign that read, "Indict, Convict, Send Killer Cops to Jail!" He said he wasn't surprised by the grand jury decision.

"There never has been any justice in these police murders," he said. "We're supposed to swallow these things whole as if this is business as usual."

Activists have said they're planning a protest outside the Justice Center on Tuesday afternoon.

The grand jury had been meeting several times a week since mid-October to hear evidence and testimony about the shooting. McGinty said he recommended to the grand jury that Loehmann and patrolman Frank Garmback not be indicted because they had no way of knowing that Tamir was carrying an Airsoft-type gun that shoots nonlethal plastic pellets instead of the actual firearm it's modeled after, a Colt semi-automatic pistol.

Texas cleans up after twisters, snow and ice pelt Midwest

GARLAND, Texas (AP)—Jacqui Gordon spent Monday sifting through the debris that had been her home, searching for old family photographs—especially of her father, who died two years ago.

She and nine others were enjoying a holiday gathering when winds began to rattle her home in suburban Dallas. They all dashed into closets and suffered only bumps and bruises, but Gordon's roof was torn away and her house destroyed.

"I just got divorced, and this is all I had," she said.

With rain all day Sunday keeping people away, residents worked on a dreary and frigid Monday to salvage what they could, with the American Red Cross distributing items like tarps, rakes and work gloves to help them.

At least 11 people died and dozens were injured in the tornadoes that swept through the Dallas area Saturday. Snow from New Mexico through the Midwest, plus flooding in Arkansas, Missouri and Illinois, added to the succession of severe weather events across the country in the last week that led to about four dozen deaths.

The storm system brought heavy snow, ice and blustery winds to several states in the nation's midsection, as well as heavy rain in already-waterlogged areas.

More than 2,100 flights across the U.S. were canceled Monday—more than half of them at Chicago's two main airports—and 3,700 were delayed, according to flight-tracking service FlightAware. A typical day sees about 150 cancellations and 4,000 delays.

Highways turned icy and treacherous in New Mexico, while Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency after blizzard conditions affected parts of the state and heavy rains fell.

ACROSS THE NATION

Puerto Rico policeman fatally shoots 3 officers after fight

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—A Puerto Rico policeman fatally shot two high-ranking officers and a policewoman on Monday following an argument and hostage taking at work that temporarily shut down the station in the U.S. territory's second largest city, authorities said. The suspect was immediately placed under arrest. The suspect, Guarionex Candelario Rivera, held a female lieutenant, a male commander and a policewoman hostage in an office before he killed them, police spokeswoman Mayra Ayala told The Associated Press. She said authorities were about to start negotiations with the 50-year-old suspect when the victims were killed. She said police did not yet have information on a motive. Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla told reporters that the suspect was injured during the shooting and remains hospitalized. Garcia declined to say what kind of injuries the officer received and how they were inflicted.

Documents: Officer tried to put woman in car after collapse

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP)—A police officer tried to put a woman into a patrol car after she collapsed at a hospital, believing that she was "making herself dead weight" to avoid going to jail, according to a police report released Monday. The woman, 57-year-old Barbara Dawson, died about 90 minutes later at Liberty-Calhoun Hospital. The state law enforcement department and the state's health care agency have launched investigations. Dawson was initially brought to the hospital on Dec. 21 by ambulance after complaining of abdominal pain. She was treated, but became unruly when she was discharged because she didn't think she was OK to be released.

Major NYC hotels pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions

NEW YORK (AP)—More than a dozen of New York City's most famed hotels are pledging to get greener. The Waldorf-Astoria New York, the Lotte New York Palace, the Pierre-A Taj Hotel and the Crowne Plaza Times Square are among the 16 city hotels—all currently thronged with tourists visiting New York for the holidays—whose owners have agreed to cut greenhouse gases from their buildings by 30 percent or more in the next decade. Mayor Bill de Blasio's office is spearheading the NYC Carbon Challenge program, and will announce the hotels' commitment on Tuesday, his aides told The Associated Press on Monday. "If some of New York's most iconic hotels can significantly reduce their carbon footprint, anyone can," the mayor said in a statement.

Asia

Korea, Japan reach deal on sex slaves

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—An apology from Japan's prime minister and a pledge of more than $8 million sealed a breakthrough deal Monday in a decades-long impasse with South Korea over Korean women forced into Japanese military-run brothels during World War II.

The accord, which aims to resolve the emotional core of South Korea's grievances with its former colonial overlord, could begin to reverse decades of animosity and mistrust between the two thriving democracies, trade partners and staunch U.S. allies. It represents a shift for Tokyo's conservative government and a new willingness to compromise by previously wary Seoul.

A statement by both countries' foreign ministers said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe "expresses anew his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women," the euphemistic name given the women.

Historians say tens of thousands of women from around Asia, many of them Korean, were sent to front-line military brothels to provide sex to Japanese soldiers.

It wasn't immediately clear if Abe would be issuing a separate written statement or if it would be directly delivered to the 46 surviving former Korean sex slaves, now in their 80s and 90s.

The language mirrored past expressions of remorse by other prime ministers, although it was seen by some in Seoul as an improvement on previous comments by Abe's hawkish government, which has been accused of whitewashing wartime atrocities.

Another deciding factor was that the 1 billion yen ($8.3 million) - to create a foundation to help provide support for the victims - came from the government, not private sources, something Tokyo has resisted in the past.

South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said Seoul considers the agreement "final and irreversible," as long as Japan faithfully follows through with its promises.

Later Monday, Abe called South Korean President Park Geun-hye and reiterated his apology. He said Tokyo would implement the deal and called the issue settled irreversibly. Park said she hoped the two countries will build mutual trust and open a new era in ties based on the agreement.

After phoning Park, Abe told reporters that the agreement was based on his commitment to stop future generations from having to repeatedly apologize.

"Japan and South Korea are now entering a new era," Abe said. "We should not drag this problem into the next generation."

Japan, wary of outsiders, keeps doors closed to refugees

TOKYO (AP)—For Mohammed, the perils of staying in Damascus crystalized when a sniper's bullet whizzed past his head while he and his cousins were on his rooftop, watching the Syrian air force bomb rebel forces.

The same roof where Mohammed and his lifelong friend Jamal used to sit in a tent and play video games. Now, instead of studying for a law degree, Mohammed is working as a fitness instructor in Tokyo, trying to squeeze in some language study and hoping that like Jamal, he'll beat the odds and win official status as a refugee in Japan.

The odds aren't good.

Out of the 7,533 people who applied for refugee status in 2014, or appealed earlier refusals, only 11 were approved. That includes Jamal, his mother and sister, whose approvals came after a year-and-a-half wait.

For most, the approval never comes: In the past five years, the proportion of applicants granted refugee status in Japan has dropped to below 1 percent—in 2014 it was just 0.2 percent. In contrast, Germany has accepted nearly 40,000 Syrian asylum-seekers since 2013, while the U.S. has pledged to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees and has resettled 2,234 since 2010.

Japan's hands-off response to the global refugee crisis, despite its generous humanitarian aid, reflects deep unease over allowing in outsiders given the insular customs of this island nation. Despite growing concerns over a shrinking labor force, the government has so far resisted calls to open the door wider, both for humanitarian and economic reasons.

Immigration officials say they suspect many applicants of being job seekers, not true refugees fleeing persecution or conflict.

But for Mohammed, the reason was "just surviving," he said.

"I was on my roof, in my favorite spot," the 24-year-old said. "Then I heard, like, fuhfft, next to my ear. A sniper just missed me. So we laid down on the floor, me and my brother and two of our neighbors and we started laughing, but this kind of laughing is like, ah, OK, we're alive."

Mohammed is among 50 Syrians in Japan who have applied for asylum. Ten left the country voluntarily. Asylum-seekers are allowed to work while their applications are being processed.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Attackers kill 3 policemen in Indonesia's Papua province

JAYAPURA, Indonesia (AP)—A group of about 15 gunmen attacked a police station in Indonesia's restive Papua province, killing three officers and wounding two others, police said Monday. Local police spokesman Col. Patrige Renwarin said the assailants attacked the station in Sinak town in the mountainous district of Puncak late Sunday while the victims were watching television. He said the attackers took away seven assault rifles and a crate of ammunition. Police are investigating the motive for the attack, which occurred ahead of a planned visit by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo to the province.

Activists welcome China's 1st domestic violence law

BEIJING (AP)—Activists largely welcomed China's first national anti-domestic violence law on Monday, although some criticized the apparent omissions of sexual violence and gay couples. The law approved Sunday by China's legislature will take effect in March, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. Women's federations and civil organizations have been pushing for a law to protect victims of domestic violence for more than 10 years. In that time, almost all the country's provinces have instituted regulations against domestic violence. Part of the battle was a traditional belief that family conflicts are private, which an official alluded to at a news conference Sunday when announcing the law.

Train carrying sulfuric acid derails in remote Australia

SYDNEY (AP)—Floodwaters were hampering emergency officials' efforts on Monday to clean up a remote site in northeast Australia where a freight train carrying sulfuric acid derailed a day earlier. The train was carrying around 200,000 liters (53,000 gallons) of the highly corrosive acid when it derailed near the small town of Julia Creek in western Queensland state on Sunday, police said in a statement. A small amount of acid and diesel fuel spilled and all 26 carriages came off the tracks, police said. Three people were treated for minor injuries. Heavy downpours were making clean-up efforts difficult on Monday, with flash flooding cutting off access to the highway adjacent to the derailment site.

World

Iraqi troops advance in Ramadi

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraqi forces backed by U.S.-led airstrikes drove Islamic State militants out of the center of Ramadi on Monday and seized the main government complex there, according to military officials, who said insurgents are still dug into pockets of the city west of Baghdad.

AP

In this Sunday, Dec. 27, 2015 photo, Iraqi security forces search a building in the government complex in central Ramadi, 70 miles (115 kilometers) west of Baghdad, Iraq.

Ramadi, the provincial capital of the sprawling Anbar province, fell to IS in May, marking a major setback for Iraqi forces and the U.S.-led campaign. Ramadi and nearby Fallujah, which is controlled by IS, saw some of the heaviest fighting of the eight-year U.S. intervention in Iraq.

In recent months Iraqi forces launched several offensives to retake Ramadi, but all had stalled. Iraqi troops began advancing into some parts of the city, located about 130 kilometers (80 miles) west of Baghdad, earlier this month. But their progress was slowed by snipers, booby traps and the militants' destruction of bridges leading into the city center.

The heavy fighting and limited access to front-lines made it difficult to follow the troops' progress, and Iraqi officials issued a string of sometimes contradictory statements.

Brig. Gen. Ahmed al-Belawi told The Associated Press that IS militants stopped firing from inside the government complex at around 8 a.m. Monday and said troops were encircling it as engineering teams cleared booby traps.

A few hours later, military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool announced in a televised statement that Ramadi had been "fully liberated."

But Gen. Ismail al-Mahlawi, head of military operations in Anbar, quickly clarified that Iraqi forces had only retaken the government complex and that parts of the city remained under IS control. He said IS fighters still control 30 percent of Ramadi and that government forces do not fully control many districts from which IS fighters have retreated.

"The troops only entered the government complex," al-Mahlawi told The Associated Press. "We can't say that Ramadi is fully liberated. There are still neighborhoods under their control and there are still pockets of resistance."

Boko Haram attacks northeast Nigerian city, town, 80 killed

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AP)—Boko Haram Islamic extremists struck a city and a town in northeastern Nigeria with rocket-propelled grenades and multiple suicide bombers Monday, killing at least 80 people, witnesses said.

In Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, at least 30 were killed and more than 90 wounded in overnight blasts and shootouts, and another 20 died in a bombing outside a mosque at dawn Monday, said Muhammed Kanar, area coordinator of the National Emergency Management Agency.

A twin suicide bombing also killed at least 30 people in Madagali, a town 150 kilometers (95 miles) southeast of Maiduguri, witnesses said. Danladi Buba said two women blew themselves up at a market near a busy bus station at about 9 a.m. Brig. Gen. Victor Ezugwu, the officer commanding in northeast Adamawa State, confirmed the attack but said casualties have yet to be established.

The attacks appear to be a challenge to President Muhammadu Buhari's declaration last week that Nigerian security forces have "technically won the war" against Boko Haram and that it is now capable of no more than suicide bombings on soft targets.

Maiduguri, with a population of about 1 million people, now hosts almost as many refugees—among the 2.5 million people driven from their homes in the 6-year-old Islamic uprising. About 20,000 people have been killed in Nigeria and hundreds others elsewhere as the insurgents have carried their conflict across its borders into Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

The military said there had been multiple attacks at four southwestern entry points to Maiduguri.

Central American nations announce deal on Cuban migrants

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP)—Central American nations have reached a deal to let the first of thousands of stranded Cuban migrants continue their journey north toward the United States next month, officials said Monday.

The humanitarian transfer will airlift an unspecified number of Cubans the first week of January from Costa Rica to El Salvador, from where they will continue by bus toward Mexico, Costa Rica's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The Guatemalan government, which hosted a diplomatic meeting earlier in the day to consider the issue, described it as a "pilot" program and said a work group has been tasked with coordinating logistics.

The two governments did not immediately release further details, citing some nations' desire for discretion on what has become a diplomatic flashpoint between Costa Rica and neighboring Nicaragua.

The number of Cubans stranded in Costa Rica has reached at least 8,000 since Nicaragua closed its border to them weeks ago. The islanders say they are trying to reach the United States, where favorable migratory policies toward Cubans mean nearly all are allowed to stay and apply for residency.

On Sunday, Pope Francis called for their plight to be resolved.

Costa Rican Foreign Minister Manuel Gonzalez said the measure will be available only to Cubans who are already in Costa Rica. Ministry spokeswoman Melissa Duran told The Associated Press it will be up to the migrants to pay the costs of their travel, but did not give more specifics.

On Dec. 18, Costa Rica stopped issuing transit visas for Cuban migrants and announced that any who arrived after that without a visa would be deported.

Cuba has seen a spike in outward migration in the year since it and Washington announced they would re-establish diplomatic ties after more than five decades of open hostility. Many Cuban migrants say they chose now to emigrate out of fear that detente could bring about an end to the U.S. policies that benefit them—although U.S. officials say no change is in the works.

Good Housekeeping

How to get started with home automation

By STACI GIORDULLO
ANGIE'S LIST

ERIC SEALS/DETROIT FREE PRESS/MCT
A security camera with motion sensor is shown installed in a home in Milford Township, Mich., on Feb. 6, 2014.

If you're not, shall we say, technically inclined, the idea of using home automation might seem out of this world. But the good news is, there's a variety of gadgets and gizmos on the market to help even the least tech-savvy person live in a smart home.

■ First steps to a smarter house

Rest easy—you don't have to go "all in" when deciding to embrace home automation.

"Pick an initial feature of your home you would use the most in terms of automation, and expand from there," says Lee Travis, owner of Wipliance in Bellevue, Washington.

But also keep in mind that you might want to add more smart technology to your home as time goes on. Investing in products that are compatible with a central automation system will help simplify the process down the road.

"A consumer can buy a thermostat or light switches and make them smartphone accessible, and have an app on your phone for each one," says Kellan C. Warren, vice-president of Kelltech Systems in Dallas. "But keep in mind what your end goal is and purchase products that get you on that path. Once you start integrating, everything can work together. You can open the garage door, turn on the lights and set the thermostat with one touch. You make the rules."

One of the most popular automation integration systems experts recommend is Control4, which starts around $1,000.

"The great thing about products like Control4 Home Automation is that you can install the system to control one feature initially; whether it's your lights, your entertainment system, your security, or more," Travis says. "Then as your needs change, you can expand on the existing system with those additional features."

■ Let there be light

Having your lights automatically come on when you walk in a room or being able to turn lights on throughout the house when you're not home is more than just convenient—it's a safety issue. You won't have to worry about stumbling over footstools in the dark or potential vandals casing a home that appears empty.

■ Get the temperature just right

Living an energy-efficient lifestyle not only helps save the planet, but it also pads your wallet. It's a win-win! A smart thermostat can help you cut down on energy bills by learning your habits and knows when to make the house warmer or cooler just for you.

■ Curtain control

Some days you might want to flood your house with sunlight. Other days, you might want to hibernate in the darkness. With automated window treatments, the decision is literally at your fingertips.

Automating your blinds, curtains or shutters can also help keep your home's interior at a comfortable temperature (blocking that late afternoon sun!) and give you privacy in an instant from the outside world. Shades can be set to open at sunrise and close automatically at sunset, or whatever time you prefer.

■ Under lock and key

Still hiding that spare key under the doormat? With the advances in electronic locks and wireless control, you don't ever have to worry about losing your house key again. Electronic locks allow you to lock or unlock the door from your cell phone or you can set a temporary code and timeframe if you're expecting a visitor. The lock will also send you a text message when your kid gets home from school—just like magic!

n Garage door assurance

How many times have you backed out of your driveway, driven halfway down the street and looked over your shoulder to make sure you actually closed your garage door? There's no need to risk a neck sprain (or running off the road) anymore once you've installed a remote access package to your garage door opener. From your smartphone, you can open or close the door and also receive activity notifications of any door movement.

Staci Giordullo is a reporter at Angie's List, a trusted provider of local consumer reviews and an online marketplace of services from top-rated providers.

Happy couples, separate beds: Finding joy in sleeping apart

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Surveys by the National Sleep Foundation suggest that anywhere from 11 to 23 percent of live-in couples sleep in separate beds.

By NARA SCHOENBERG
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Jennifer Adams has tried sleeping in the same bed with her husband.

"We were both wrecked," she says. "It would have made a great cartoon. He knew he snored and was keeping me up. I was kind of pushing him to roll him over, and he started to feel really bad that he was keeping me awake, so he got anxious about falling asleep."

Soon, neither one was sleeping, and he still had to wake up at 5 a.m. for his job as a ceramic tiler.

The solution they arrived at is surprisingly common: Surveys by the National Sleep Foundation suggest that anywhere from 11 to 23 percent of live-in couples sleep in separate beds. But Adams' willingness to talk about her experience sets her apart.

In the past few years, home design bloggers (such as apartmenttherapy.com) and some thought leaders (Dr. James Hamblin at the Atlantic) have begun questioning the widely held belief that all happy couples sleep in the same bed. Some relationship books ("The Power of Surrender" by Dr. Judith Orloff) present separate sleeping as a valid option. But Adams, an Australian communications professional, has gone further, stepping forward as an author and blogger to share her personal experience of separate sleeping.

Brooke O'Donnell, managing director of Trafalgar Square Publishing, distributor of Adams' book, "Sleeping Apart, Not Falling Apart," in the U.S., says it does not appear to have an American equivalent.

"The idea of sleeping apart has such a stigma, and this addresses it so well," O'Donnell says.

Adams points to numerous examples of stigma against separate sleeping, which is widely associated with sexual disinterest and relationship turmoil. The term "sleeping together" means sex, she points out, and "sleeping in separate beds" is verbal shorthand for fighting. Gossip magazines hammer home the point that happy couples sleep in the same bed.

"Is that really the only thing that allows you to have sex?" Adams says. "Come on!"

Sleeping apart can reduce resentment and increase wellbeing, she says. And if you wake up in the night feeling amorous, your spouse is only a bed or a bedroom away.

"Sometimes my husband will FaceTime me and invite me to bed," she says. "It doesn't stop you from having sex. It just doesn't."

Adams met her husband in her late 30s, after a previous relationship foundered, in part because her ex, a snorer, was unwilling to accommodate her need to sleep in a separate room.

"I was absolutely at my wits' end," she says. "I was sneaking out of the room to sleep on the floor of the bedroom next door."

In theory, she says, sharing a bed is a wonderful thing; she'd do it with her husband if she could. But after sharing a bed for a week, during which both experienced intense sleep deprivation, they had a talk and decided to try separate beds on weekdays. Later, they moved to separate beds every night.

"If you're able to talk to your partner and have that freedom in the relationship to be yourself and have your needs met, then this is just one of those additional things that come up," she says.

Adams got a lot of raised eyebrows from friends and family, she says. But 11 years later, she and her husband are still madly in love—and still happily sleeping in separate beds.

"We've just kept talking," she says. "And we still hop into each other's beds, and I'll lie in his bed at night until he kicks me out at 8:30 because he wants to go to sleep. You make it work because you want to make it work."

COMFORT FOOD

Pulled Pork Pot Pie

1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped collard greens
1 box (8 1/2 ounces) corn-muffin mix*
1 container (18 to 20 ounces) refrigerated barbecue sauce with shredded pork
1 can (15 to 16 ounces) black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained

1. Heat oven to 400 F.
2. Remove frozen collard greens from package. In small microwave-safe bowl, heat collard greens in microwave oven on High 2 to 3 minutes or just until greens are mostly thawed but still cool enough to handle. Squeeze greens to remove excess water.
3. Prepare corn-muffin mix as label directs for cornbread, but do not bake.
4. Spread sauce with pork in bottom of 1 1/2-quart glass or ceramic baking dish. Top with black-eyed peas and collard greens. Spoon batter evenly over greens. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until filling is hot and top is well-browned. Makes 4 main-dish servings.

** Each serving: About 615 calories, 16g total fat (5g saturated), 34g protein, 82g carbohydrate, 11g fiber, 94mg cholesterol, 1,705mg sodium. For thousands of triple-tested recipes, visit our website at www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipefinder/.*

Life & Style

Happy (nearly) 2016: Time for resolutions big and small

NEW YORK (AP)—Sure, sure, sure. You're gonna quit smoking, lose weight, get organized and work for world peace in 2016.

And we're pulling for you. We really are. You can do it!

New Year's resolutions come as big strokes and small victories, along with a high rate of failure. Is it best to reach for the stars or make a petite promise? We asked a few folks about their plans to do better, go bigger or simply baby step it outside the box next year.

SOCAL WALKABOUTS

Jarone Ashkenazi is a lifelong Los Angelino, but at 26 he considers himself "someone who is more introspective by nature." Hence, he's been reluctant to grab his city by the tail.

"I thrive in new settings and environments," Ashkenazi said, "it's just at times I'm too hesitant to put myself out there."

That will hopefully change with his new spreadsheet. He has broken up his get-out-of-the-house goals into categories: activities, concerts, restaurants, bars, outdoors and nightlife. He got an early start with a couple of hikes.

Among his first adventures come 2016: The Broad contemporary art museum, an evening stroll through the holiday lights at the Getty Center and the Chill at The Queen Mary (think winter wonderland under a giant dome).

AP

This Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015 photo provided by Lavinia Lumezanu shows Jarone Ashkenazi on the Escondido Canyon Trail in Malibu, Calif. His new year's resolution is to break out and get more active in things to do around his native Los Angeles.

So what took him so long?

"While I was younger I was too naive to think of all this city has to offer," Ashkenazi said, "and now that I'm older I want to take full advantage of everything."

SEVEN MARATHONS IN SEVEN DAYS

You heard it right. Aimee Shilling, a 35-year-old mother of four in East Canton, Ohio, has signed up to run seven marathons in seven days come October. And she'll be doing it to raise money for World Vision's "run for water" program.

Clean water initiatives have been a goal since she took a mission trip to Jamaica in 2000. Running has been a passion since she joined the cross-country team in high school. She's a regular marathoner and ultra-marathoner, rising at 4 a.m. at least three days a week to run with friends, returning home to get her kids up and ready for school.

Shilling has done back-to-back marathons before, but never seven consecutively. The new year aside, she made a promise to herself long ago to run 40 marathons or ultra-marathons before her 40th birthday. The seventh race in her 7-in-7 series would be her 40th, so she's ahead of schedule.

AP

This April 26, 2015 photo provided by Debbie Tallman shows Aimee Shilling, right, and husband Todd Shilling standing with their children, Caleb, Micaiah, from left, Gabriel and Tabitha, in Canton, Ohio, after the Pro Football Hall of Fame Marathon. Aimee ran the marathon and resolves in the new year to run seven more in seven consecutive days.

"As long as I can start the series healthy, I'm pretty confident. None of them will be fast," Shilling laughed.

AP

In this Thursday, Dec. 24, 2015 photo provided by Meredith Bay Tyack, Tyack stands in her kitchen with her year-old daughter, Eleanor, in Burlington, Vermont. Her new year's resolution is to take on a zero waste lifestyle, eliminating plastic and disposable food packaging and other items.

ZERO WASTE

Aspiring to this lifestyle is lofty. Aspiring to this lifestyle with a baby is loftier. Say hello to Meredith Bay Tyack in Burlington, Vermont.

The pursuit for the 30-year-old began with the birth of her daughter a year ago.

"Cloth diapering was really the catalyst for us. We started purging plastic and disposable items from our life left and right," she said.

She and her husband already use a plastic-free water filtration system, with charcoal that can be composted after six months. She stopped buying paper towels and eliminated numerous other small plastic and disposable items.

"But I'm still staring at a full garbage each week and it's frustrating," Bay Tyack said. "We're mindful consumers. We shop at our farmer's market and yet we're still producing so much garbage."

She's still using plastic garbage bags, for instance.

"A zero waste lifestyle is an exciting prospect for me because while I can't control many things, I can control myself and the small environment I inhabit," she said. "Maybe I won't clean up the oceans on my own, but at least I know I will not be contributing additional waste.

AP

This Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2015 photo provided by Joanne Papini shows Papini in her sewing room in Walnut Creek, Calif. Her new year's resolution is to shut all drawers and cabinets and stop leaving lids and boxes half-open, believing the small step will lead to less chaos at home.

TWIST AND CLOSE

Meanwhile in Northern California, Joanne Papini in Walnut Creek has a small problem that's annoying the heck out of her. She doesn't close drawers, cabinets, boxes—anything with a lid, really. She sort of half closes things, like the top of the mayo in the fridge or the inner lining of the cereal box, along with the cereal box itself.

And at 54, she's beginning to wonder what it all means.

"I know that sounds weird but not closing things has become a problem for me. Do I think I'm saving time by having things left open? Am I airing out my pencil drawer," Papini ponders, "or am I just rebelling?"

Papini lives alone. Rather, she's the only one with opposable thumbs in her household. But she can't blame her two dogs.

"I just see it as a sign of chaos in my life. It seems like it translates into maybe not enough respect for my belongings and a lack of self-care," she said.

Papini comes from a "jam it, cram it" family growing up and merely extended the stuffing of things into drawers into leaving drawers open.

As for not twisting lids completely closed, she can't figure out if she's (a) trying to save time, (b) lazy about it or (c) I might want it later so I'll just skip this step.

Weight-loss resolution? Watch 'In Defense of Food' first

LOS ANGELES (AP)—January is looming, and we all know what that means: A resolution to lose weight and get healthy. Just like the 2015 declaration. And the one before that.

What diet to choose this time? Low-fat? Low-carb? Gluten-free or prehistoric? Or just throw out the scale and surrender to fate and French fries?

Stop, take a breath and consider instead a seven-word alternative offered by prominent food writer Michael Pollan that embraces clarity and shuns extremism.

Here goes: Eat food, not too much, mostly plants.

Behind that advice is a wealth of scientific, medical and anecdotal evidence as explored in the documentary "In Defense of Food," airing 9-11 p.m. EST Wednesday on PBS stations (check local listings).

Pollan is an amiable, engaging guide through a buffet line that includes the how and why of the modern diet, the ever-shifting barrage of confusing, conflicting decrees (Don't eat eggs! Eat eggs!) and, most importantly, realistic alternatives to chew over.

"The more I worked on this issue, the more I realized that painting things in black and white is not the way to help people move, because people move incrementally," said Pollan, whose books include "In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto" and "The Omnivore's Dilemma."

"Relaxing about our eating is really important, too. I don't want to make people more anxious about it," he added. "We already are made very anxious."

But there is reason for concern. A sharp rise in U.S. obesity and diabetes parallels our devotion to a diet heavy in meat, white flour and fat.

And sugar: We consume about 1,000 percent more of it per day than we did 200 years ago, Dr. Robert Lustig , a professor at the University of California, San Francisco, says in "In Defense of Food."

Among the guidelines Pollan offers in the documentary:

■ "When I say, 'Eat food,' I'm basically saying eat the kinds of things that people have been eating for a long time," including meat, fish, vegetables, fruit and grains, but everything in moderation.

■ Avoid supermarket center aisles that harbor the processed foods that Pollan labels "edible food-like substances" that don't deserve to be called food. "If it came from a plant, eat it. If it was made in a plant, don't," he says.

■ Use smaller plates and glasses to reduce portions.

Pollan says his inclusion of meat—in limited quantities—hasn't made his approach popular with carnivores who feel he's dissing their choices or with vegetarians. But it reflects his approach to being a happy and healthy eater.

'Star Wars' makers have high hopes for China success

SHANGHAI (AP)—The latest Star Wars movie broke the $1 billion mark before fans in China could see it, but producers anticipate "The Force Awakens" will play "very very well" in the world's second-biggest film market.

The film opens in China on Jan. 9.

Director J.J. Abrams watched the Chinese premiere in Shanghai with a Chinese audience Sunday night. He told a news conference Monday that he was thrilled to see people "laughing and cheering in exactly the same places that we've seen other audiences."

"It's a testament to the power of cinema, that it does not matter where you're from, you can get caught up in a story," Abrams said.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" took 12 days to earn $1 billion worldwide, becoming the fastest movie to achieve such a feat. The previous movie to reach $1 billion the fastest was "Jurassic World," which did it in 13 days in June—and which had the benefit of record grosses in China.

"Star Wars" producer Kathleen Kennedy said the movie's success to date was "a huge surprise."

"We certainly hoped for enormous success but I think the fact that we crossed the billion-dollars ... it's almost so overwhelming it's difficult to really process just what the response has been to the movie so far, and it hasn't even opened here yet," she said.

"Certainly we're hoping and anticipating that it will play very very well here."

AP

In this Sunday, Dec. 27 photo, Chinese fans, dressed as Star Wars character Stormtroopers, gesture as they arrive for the premiere of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" in Shanghai, China.

The Chinese market has become increasingly important for Hollywood as revenues from movie theaters stagnate at home. Some movies have incorporated Chinese characters or stories to try to appeal to the Chinese movie-going audience.

Asked whether "Star Wars" movies would do the same in the future, Kennedy said they had just finished shooting "Rogue One," the first stand alone "Star Wars" story. Hong Kong martial arts actor Donnie Yen and Chinese actor and director Jiang Wen have roles in it.

"They play wonderful characters and certainly there are many mythologies inside Chinese literature that I know we can explore in the future and find ways in which we can integrate some of those stories into the Star Wars universe," said Kennedy.

Amazon holiday shipping, Christmas Eve deliveries set record

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—Online retailer Amazon has been a prime beneficiary of more consumers doing their holiday shopping online and procrastinating.

Amazon Prime, the company's $99-a-year loyalty program that includes unlimited free two-day shipping, gained 3 million new members in the third week of December alone. Meanwhile, the number of Prime members shopping via mobile more than doubled this holiday season, Amazon said Monday.

Christmas Eve was the biggest day yet for deliveries by the company's Prime Now service, which now offers free two-hour delivery to more than 20 metropolitan areas. When Prime Now launched last year, it only delivered within Manhattan.

Seattle-based Amazon also said it shipped a record number of items worldwide for the holidays, with items going to 185 countries.

The 20-year-old company is profiting from major trends reshaping holiday shopping in the U.S.

More and more people do part or even all of their shopping online, increasingly using mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones to "window shop" and then buy items from their couch or their desk at work. Retailers are deluging consumers with e-mail offers for online-only deals.

And procrastinators, once stuck dealing with huge crowds at shopping malls and big-box stores right before Christmas, now can do last-minute shopping online. Amazon and some other retailers promised that items ordered as late as the morning of Christmas Eve would arrive by midnight.

Amazon said nearly 70 percent of its customers this holiday used a mobile device to shop. Worldwide, on Cyber Monday alone, those customers ordered more than 35 electronic items per second and Adele's new CD, "25," every 3 seconds.

San Francisco demands help investigating Bieber graffiti

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—San Francisco's city attorney is demanding that Justin Bieber's music publisher help determine who is responsible for sidewalk graffiti promoting the pop star's latest album.

City attorney Dennis Herrera sent a letter to Universal Music Group on Monday, saying the graffiti appears to have been applied with spray paint that has not come off even after recent rainstorms. That contrasts with other recent sidewalk marketing campaigns that have used chalk, according to Herrera.

Herrera said public works crews have removed some of the graffiti at great expense, although he did not provide a figure. The city attorney's office released photographs of eight instances of the graffiti and asked for Universal's help in determining its full scope.

Emails seeking comment from representatives of Universal Music Group were not immediately returned.

The graffiti promoting Bieber's new album, "Purpose," has been found in Haight-Ashbury and other neighborhoods. City officials have received complaints about it, Herrera said.

"This prohibited marketing practice illegally exploits our city's walkable neighborhoods and robust tourism, intentionally creates visual distractions that pose risks to pedestrians on busy rights of way, and irresponsibly tells our youth that likeminded lawlessness and contempt for public property are condoned and encouraged by its beneficiaries," Herrera said in his letter.

Herrera's office previously went after a 2010 marketing campaign that glued decals of fake $25,000 bills to city sidewalks to promote an online game. An advertising agency agreed to pay the city a $45,000 penalty for the decals.

Actor Sacha Baron Cohen, wife fund help for Syria victims

NEW YORK (AP)—Actors Sacha Baron Cohen and his wife, Isla Fisher, are donating $1 million to Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee to support victims of the conflict in Syria.

Save the Children has announced that one-half of the sum will fund a program vaccinating more than 250,000 children against a potential measles outbreak in Northern Syria.

The other half of the donation will go toward supporting families, with a special concern for women and children, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries. That money will go toward education, health care, shelter and sanitation, Save the Children said.

Cohen, 44, starred in comedy features including "Borat" and "The Dictator." Fisher, 39, appeared in "Confessions of a Shopaholic" and the Netflix comedy series "Arrested Development."

Heirs to New Hampshire poet sue 'Big Bang Theory' producers

NEW YORK (AP)—The heirs to a New Hampshire teacher who wrote a poem about a "soft kitty" eight decades ago said in a lawsuit Monday that TV's "The Big Bang Theory" is violating their copyrights.

Edith Newlin's daughters sued CBS and other media-related companies over the copyright to a song the lawsuit says has repeatedly been used on the hit sitcom.

According to the lawsuit, "The Big Bang Theory," one of the highest-rated shows on television, used lyrics written by Newlin in the 1930s without buying the rights. The lyrics begin: "Soft kitty, warm kitty."

"The Big Bang Theory" characters have periodically sung a lullaby involving that phrase, often to comfort theoretical physicist Sheldon Cooper, played by Jim Parsons.

A spokeswoman for CBS declined to comment. Messages seeking comment from other companies sued by Ellen Newlin Chase and Margaret Chase Perry were not immediately returned Monday.

Edith Newlin died in 2004. She had worked as a nursery school teacher in Alstead, New Hampshire, for about 35 years. Her daughters still live in the small town.

Catholic hospitals value lives of mother and child

DEAR ABBY: You printed a letter from a woman (Nov. 25) whose husband told her while she was pregnant that, if it came to a choice, he would choose the life of the baby over hers. Your response contained a piece of misinformation I would appreciate you correcting for your readers.

You asserted that it is Catholic policy to save the life of the baby over the mother in obstetrical emergencies. Abby, that is one of the oldest but most persistent pieces of misinformation out there! This inaccurate statement has been replayed even in movies in spite of repeated denials by Catholic hospitals and the professionals who render care in them.

The fact is: Catholic policy is abundantly clear on the dignity of both mother and baby, and makes no priority of one over the other. Catholic hospitals operate with the same standards of safety in maternity care and are inspected by the same organizations that inspect non-Catholic maternity programs such as the Joint Commission and the licensing agency of each state. Catholic hospitals must adhere to the same robust standards as every other maternity service in the country.

I would appreciate it if you could assure your readers that, while this makes for good movies and novels, it is not the Catholic position. The dignity of the life of both mother and baby are critically important to all those serving in Catholic health care. Thank you for your help with this.

SR. CAROL KEEHAN, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

DEAR SISTER CAROL: Since printing that letter, I have received a crash course in ethics at Catholic hospitals. I apologize to you and to my Catholic readers for saying what I did. In the interest of educating my readers, I am sharing some of the enlightening letters I received. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: In the days before blood banks and antibiotics, very few women survived C-sections. Obstetrical complications (now solved by surgical delivery) created a dilemma: Either allow a dysfunctional labor to continue until the child died and could be forcibly dragged or dissected through the birth canal, or perform the surgery that would cause the mother's death.

About the only time such an issue could arise in contemporary America would be in the rare case of a pregnant woman who is discovered to have an aggressive cancer, and has to decide whether to start chemo or radiation therapy that could abort or harm the fetus, or delay until after delivery, which could allow the tumor to grow or metastasize.

ROBIN T., RICHMOND, CALIF.

DEAR ABBY: Devout Catholics are pro-life in every instance, and, of course, efforts to save both mother and infant are always the rule. But the value of the life of a newborn never surpasses the value of the life of the mother. Never!

CATHOLIC DOCTOR IN OHIO

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

DEAR ABBY

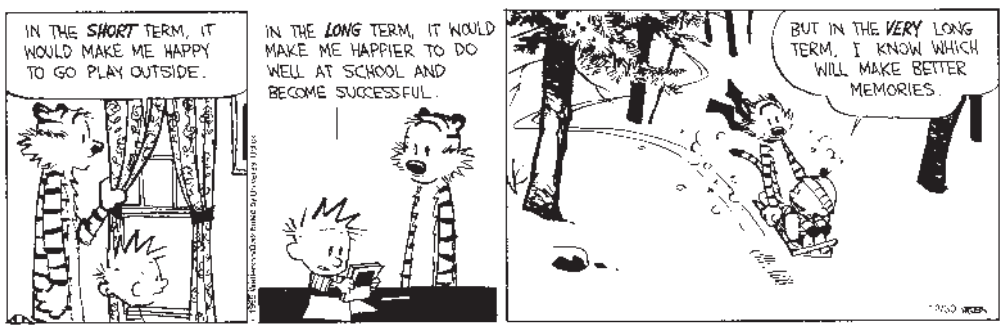
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

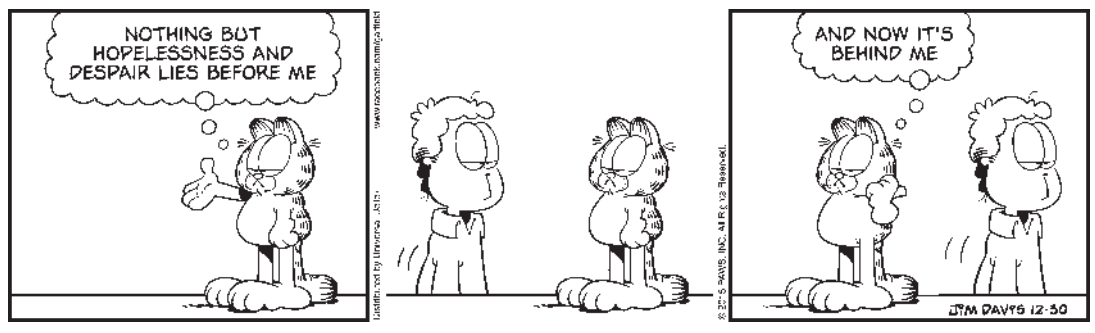
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


IN THE SHORT TERM, IT WOULD MAKE ME HAPPY TO GO PLAY OUTSIDE.
IN THE LONG TERM, IT WOULD MAKE ME HAPPIER TO DO WELL AT SCHOOL AND BECOME SUCCESSFUL.
BUT IN THE VERY LONG TERM, I KNOW WHICH WILL MAKE BETTER MEMORIES.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

WE STOCKED UP FOR TOMORROW NIGHT!
GREAT!
WE'RE ALL SET FOR ANOTHER "NEWMAN NEW YEAR'S EVE."
WE GOT BALLOONS, HATS, NOISEMAKERS, SNACKS, A GIANT CONFETTI CANNON, STREAMERS AND SPARKLING CIDER.
WAIT. DID YOU SAY "GIANT CONFETTI CANNON"?
I TOLD YOU TO MUMBLE THAT ONE.
12-30

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

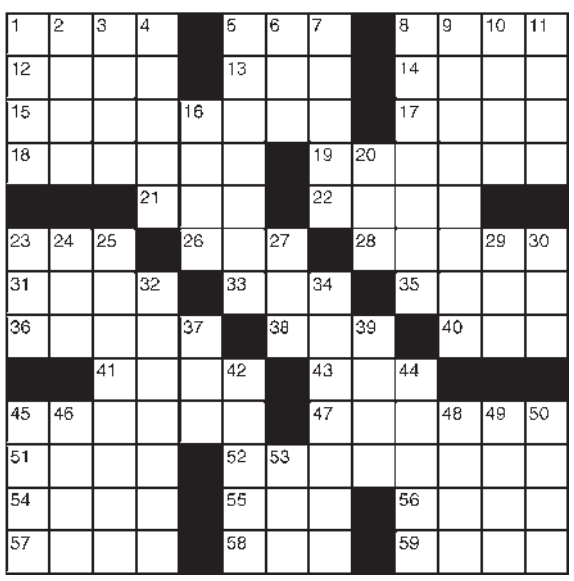
ACROSS
1 Cozy home
5 Med-school grad
8 Israel's Eban
12 Skin soother
13 "Put — Happy Face"
14 Urban blight
15 Rodgers and Hart song
17 Chaste
18 Season-ed, like peanuts
19 Willow trees
21 Actor Holbrook
22 French 101 verb
23 Convent figure
26 Hanoi holiday
28 Excited, with "up"
31 "Stat!"
33 Bando or Mineo
35 Like morning grass
36 Works on the road?
38 Henpeck
40 Observe
41 Yin counterpart
43 Big battle
45 Little rock
47 Like unhealthy city air
51 Port in Norway
52 Loyal
54 Praise
55 Here, in Arles
56 Take — loan (borrow cash)
57 Chop — (Chinese dish)
58 Make lace
59 Hardy lass

DOWN
1 Captures
2 Queen of scat
3 Heart's partner
4 Babies cut them
5 Random drawings?
6 Lennon's lady
7 Kayak kin
8 Hoped (to)
9 Ol' — (Sinatra nickname)
10 "Ironside" star
11 Iowa city
16 Deli staple
20 Wall St. buy
23 Snooze
24 July 4 honoree
25 Color of a sailor suit
27 Hosiery hue
29 Ram's mate
30 Henna, for one
32 Prestigious TV award
34 Court case
37 NBC weekend show
39 Monopoly, e.g.
42 "Understand?"
44 Man of steel?
45 D.C. insiders
46 Jacob's sib
48 Sticky stuff
49 Moxie
50 Pro votes
53 TV brand

Solution time: 24 mins.

P	I	A	F	■	A	F	F	■	M	I	R	A
U	S	S	R	■	D	A	B	■	A	V	I	S
M	A	H	I	M	A	H	I	■	L	E	F	T
A	W	E	■	U	P	S	■	P	E	S	T	O
■	■	■	M	S	I	■	I	A	M	■	■	■
M	I	C	A	H	■	M	O	R	O	C	C	O
A	M	O	K	■	E	O	N	■	D	E	A	R
C	A	Y	E	N	N	E	■	M	E	O	W	S
■	■	■	M	A	D	■	S	O	I	■	■	■
S	A	L	E	M	■	F	L	O	■	M	A	A
O	D	O	R	■	M	A	I	N	M	A	S	T
M	O	O	R	■	E	T	C	■	P	R	I	M
E	S	P	Y	■	T	S	K	■	S	E	A	S

Yesterday's answer 12-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eliza Dushku, 35; Laila Ali, 38; Tiger Woods, 40; Matt Lauer, 58.

Happy Birthday: Don't let anything stand in your way. Recognize opportunities and make a point to forge into the future with confidence and brute force. It's up to you to make thing happen, so don't waste time waiting for others to catch up. Don't let emotional matters deter you from getting ahead. Put things in perspective and don't look back. Your numbers are 8, 15, 24, 28, 32, 44.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Lady luck is in your corner. When it comes to money, contracts, negotiations and settlements, the planets favor you. Hesitation will be your downfall and arguments will be a waste of time. When an opportunity arises, give it your best shot. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Open up conversations with people who have an inside view of an industry that interests you. Networking and socializing with your peers will lead to a new friendship with a colleague you want to collaborate with. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You will face opposition if you aren't forthright about what your motives are. Do your best to reveal what you want and what you are offering. It's better to know where you stand than to live a confused life. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Don't make changes just because someone else does. Focus on tradition, family and reconnecting with relatives you don't get to see very often. The memories will stir up ideas and inspire you to make plans in the new year. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): It's the festive season, and entertainment, socializing and finding time to be affectionate with someone you love is encouraged. A trip to the spa or to spruce up your image will be just what you need to lift your spirits. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You'll face opposition if you share your personal thoughts and plans. Work undercover until you come up with a foolproof plan. A networking function will be a good place to pick up information. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You are running out of time. Make a point to enforce the changes you want to make before the turn of the year. It's important to enter 2016 with a clean slate. You will have to be secretive to avoid interference. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Share your ideas and plans with someone you love or want to spend more time with. Favors will be granted if you decide to enter into a joint venture. Unusual changes at home will inspire you to be more creative. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Stick close to home and abide by the rules and regulations. You will face opposition if you are indulgent or try to ignore the assignments that are due before the year comes to a close. Secrets will be revealed. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't leave anything undone. Avoid arguments or conflicts with someone who doesn't understand what you are doing. Finish what you start and head in a direction that will allow you to lay down a solid foundation for future negotiations. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Look at your options and ponder what you want to achieve next year. You can bring about changes based on past experience and future goals. Take physical steps to ensure you will be ready when the time comes. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): The disclosure of a personal secret will leave you confused and uncertain about what to do next. Don't let your emotions take over and lead to a situation you cannot reverse. Bide your time and seek legal advice. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, kind and a risk-taker. You are open-minded and persuasive.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				3				
			1	9	6		8	3
9		1				5		7
6		4				8		1
1	2						7	4
	9						2	
		7				9		
		3	4		9	1		
			6	5	2			

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	4	9	5	8	3	6	1	7
7	3	8	2	1	6	4	5	9
5	1	6	9	4	7	8	3	2
6	2	5	1	3	4	9	7	8
4	9	3	7	5	8	2	6	1
1	8	7	6	2	9	5	4	3
3	7	2	4	9	5	1	8	6
8	5	1	3	6	2	7	9	4
9	6	4	8	7	1	3	2	5

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/29

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SPORTS PLAYOFFS **Solution: 4 letters**

T	A	C	E	R	O	C	S	E	G	D	U	J	F	B
R	N	H	O	D	L	E	I	Ⓕ	Ⓐ	Ⓝ	Ⓢ	L	I	A
A	A	E	O	M	A	S	N	I	W	S	S	E	N	S
I	L	E	M	C	P	R	N	T	G	W	D	A	A	E
N	Y	R	S	A	K	E	E	E	E	I	D	G	L	B
I	S	S	S	E	N	E	T	N	E	M	O	U	S	A
N	I	O	E	T	M	R	Y	I	A	R	D	E	E	L
G	S	Y	F	I	L	A	U	Q	T	E	G	C	E	L
M	T	O	S	F	R	U	G	O	H	I	N	S	R	A
A	U	H	C	R	I	E	S	C	T	A	O	T	E	B
T	R	U	O	C	E	C	S	E	V	I	S	N	F	T
C	F	R	I	S	E	Y	I	D	R	D	A	I	E	O
H	S	R	E	I	T	R	A	A	O	E	E	O	R	O
L	E	S	S	O	R	C	A	L	L	M	S	P	F	F
P	I	H	S	R	O	S	N	O	P	S	K	C	I	P

© 2015 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com Download the Wonderword Game App! 12/30

Advance, Analysis, Arena, Baseball, Cheers, Competition, Court, Fans, Field, Finals, Football, Games, Greens, Hockey, Host, Judges, Lacrosse, League, Match, Media, Meet, News, Odds, Officials, Picks, Players, Points, Qualify, Referee, Results, Rise, Schedule, Score, Season, Series, Soccer, Sponsorship, Swim, Tiers, Tournament, Training, Turf, Wins

Yesterday's Answer: Vegetarian

Treasury 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contain 130 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

EMPLOYMENT

(1) Marketing Representative. Must have a 4 year college degree, (BS or BA in Marketing Management), Bilingual. BFJ Corporation. Email:jcjones@saipan.com

5 Star G Corporation

Job Vacancy Announcement

4 Heavy Equipment Operator

$7.00/hour with additional $1.5/hr for over time.
U.S., Green Card, AED, and
CW workers are encouraged to apply.

For more information, please call 285-0478

Warehouse for RENT

REM LOWERBASE

Warehouse #3 - Size: 6,000sq/ft
$0.65 per sq/ft. Negotiable

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL
235-6527/28 or 285-1317

United Brothers Inc.
Is looking for the following:

- 2 Mechanic
- 1 Auto Painter
- 1 Body Repairer
- 1 Maintenance Repairer

Minimum of 5 years experience.
Call 323-1328 for inquiries.

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is inviting qualified individuals to apply for the following position:

PROGRAMMER ANALYST
Associate's degree in computer science or computer programming or information technology and at least 3 years of progressive work-related experience in information technology. Must have strong practical knowledge in various programming languages, operating systems and relational databases management particularly in midrange Relational Database Management System (RDMS) environment such as SQL server. Knowledge in windows-based and web-based programming is a must.

Applications can be obtained and submitted at L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. Human Resources Office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan.
Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience.
To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Friday, January 8, 2016.

L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
Qualified women, minorities and person with disabilities may apply.

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NEW 2, 3, and 4 bedroom energy efficient apartments in Saipan.
Lower utility costs up to 70% through solar panels and solar hot water.
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For pictures, amenities, and application information visit our website
www.ironwoodhousing.com
or call 670-233-4348. Applications are being accepted Monday - Friday, 8:30a.m. to 5:00p.m. and on Saturday, 9:00a.m. to 12:00p.m., at Ironwood Community Center on Middle Road, Gualo Rai.

WHATZIT Solution: Living on the edge

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

AK TRAC Manager

Atkins Kroll is seeking an independent and outgoing individual who is looking for a dynamic career to fill the position of Toyota Rent a Car Manager. In this growth market the successful person will be responsible and accountable for the successful operation of the Toyota Rent a Car department.

Qualification

- Prior experience in the car rental industry within a management capacity.
- Minimum one year experience in service/sales in the travel, retail, or hospitality industry.
- Must be customer focused, results driven and possess the ability to consistently produce sales.
- Analytical skills that diagnosis numerical trends and target root cause to performance below standards.
- Understands managing to achieve best practices performance environment.
- Ability to organize and express ideas and information clearly, accurately, and effectively through verbal and written capabilities.
- Must be professional and promote a positive attitude among customers and peers.
- Must be articulate and possess excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Flexibility to handle multiple tasks in an organized manner.
- Must have excellent administrative, organizational skills and excellent Microsoft Office skills.

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COMPETITIVE WAGES & EXCELLENT BENEFITS
Benefits: Medical and Dental Insurance Plan, 401k Plan, Long Term Disability Insurance, Life Insurance, Paid Holidays, Vacation, and Sick Leave.

If you meet these qualifications submit your resume to hr@akguam.com or apply in person at Atkins Kroll, Inc.
Finance & Admin. Office
No phone calls please!

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Want to earn $100,000 or more a year?

What we are looking for:

- Someone who has previous Finance and Insurance sales experience
- Someone who will talk to 100% of our customers, offering them 100% of our products, 100% of the time!
- Someone who gets a buzz out of knowing everything about products and talking about/selling them
- An outgoing personality with excellent communication (both with our customers and internally with staff)
- Very good paperwork and administration using available IT systems
- Self- driven and action oriented to get the job done at often fast pace in a professional and fun workplace
- Follow through from beginning to end with customers and staff so all know the status of the car sale
- Understanding of teams around them to be able to work cohesively and all achieve great results

Interested?

Send your resume to hr@akguam.com or apply in person at Atkins Kroll, Inc., Finance & Admin. Office, Chalan Msr Guerrero, San Jose Village Saipan
No phone calls please!

AK IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
www.aksaipan.com

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$30
• 5-Liner	$24	$45

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Primtek Incorporated
***dba* Primtek Construction**
Office Address: Kannat Tabla Dr. corner Long Lane
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 504921, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 235-0064 • Fax/Phone: (670) 235-3897
Email: primtek.saipan@gmail.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Position: **Project Engineer/Civil Engineer**
Salary Offered: $ 17.87/hour
Job Description: Prepares bids, plans, drawings, specifications and construction cost estimates; Estimates quantities and cost of materials, equipment, or labor to determine project feasibility; Ensures equipments and materials are in accordance with contract drawings and specifications; Directs or participate in surveying to lay out installations or establish reference points, grades, or elevations to guide construction; Computes load and grade requirements, water flow rates, or material stress factors to determine design specifications; Monitors and inspects project sites to monitor progress and ensure conformance to design specifications and safety or sanitation standards; Manages and directs the construction, operations, or maintenance activities at project site; Manages document control processes, including change orders, subcontractor billings, field production tracking, purchasing and contract administration; Responsible for project planning, operations and scheduling, resource allocation, project accounting, and control, providing technical direction and ensuring compliance with quality standards; Provides technical advice to industrial or managerial personnel regarding design, construction, or program modifications or structural repairs; Conducts quality control inspections of completed work; and Coordinates with project owners, consultants, architects, engineers, contractors, sub-contractors and concerned government agencies.

Minimum Qualifications: With a college degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. Must have at least 10 years of relevant work experience as a Project Engineer/Civil Engineer in a company that specializes in the construction of commercial and institutional buildings, roads, and related structures.
Special Selection Factors: Must be willing and able to work week-ends, rotating shifts and holidays when required. Employment is contingent upon successful completion of a pre-employment written test and interview.

Place of Employment: Successful candidate will be assigned to work in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

How to Apply: Submit or email a comprehensive professional resume to:

PRIMTEK INCORPORATED
Office Address: Kannat Tabla Dr. corner Long Lane, Saipan, CNMI
Phone: (670) 235-0064
Email: primtek.saipan@gmail.com

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), PRIMTEK INCORPORATED will make reasonable accommodations during any and all phases of the selection process for individuals with a disability. Please call (670) 235-0064 to request accommodations. PRIMTEK INCORPORATED is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or disability.

CORAL OCEAN GOLF RESORT

Job Vacancy Announcement

❖ **(1) Accounting Supervisor**
Bachelor's Degree in Accountancy, or equivalent. Have at least three to five years work related experience in Hotel/Golf Course industry or field auditing work. Have knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, A/P, A/R, G/L, bank analysis and reporting of financial data. Excellent in mathematical and communication skills. Ability to maintain highly confidential nature of accounting works and possess professionalism with good manners and right conduct. Knowledge in different accounting software application must know how to operate Peachtree program and must be computer literate. Must be able to work under pressure, and meet deadlines and can be able to manage. Willing to work in flexible shifts, in all weather condition, days, evenings weekends and holidays.
Salary: $8.00 to $9.50 per hour

❖ **(1) Accountant**
Bachelor's Degree in Accountancy or equivalent. Have at least 2 to 4 years accounting work experience in a Hotel/Golf industry. Have knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, A/P, A/R, G/L, bank analysis and reporting of financial data. Excellent in mathematical and communication skills. Ability to maintain highly confidential nature of accounting works and possess professionalism with good manners and right conduct. Knowledge in different accounting software application must know how to operate Peachtree program and must be computer literate. Must be able to work under pressure, and meet deadlines. Willing to work in flexible shifts, in all weather condition, days, evenings weekends and holidays.
Salary: $6.50 to $8.00 per hour

❖ **Front Desk Clerk**
(1) Japanese Speaking ; (1) Korean Speaking ; (1) Chinese speaking
High School Diploma or equivalent. Have at least three months to one year of related work experienced. Knowledge of principle and processes for providing excellent personal and customer service skills. Including handling large group of arrivals. Excellent interpersonal skills with a positive attitude, professional, neat and well groomed at all times. Must be able to speak and understand English and preferably fluent in Korean language. Computer proficiency and email communication. Willing to work in flexible shifts, days, evenings, weekend and holidays and be able to stand for prolonged period of time.
Salary: $6.05 to $7.50 per hour

❖ **Night Duty Manager**
Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality, Business Management or equivalent. At least three to five years working experienced management level in a hotel industry. Knowledgeable in hotel night audit. Knowledge of principle and process for providing customer and personal services and interpret financial data like budgets and expenses reports. Requiring computer skills, mathematics and basic accounting. Speaking additional language like Japanese or Chinese and or Korean is an advantage. Knowledgeable in Hotel system like Fidelio and Opera is preferred but not required. Experienced in handling large group of arrivals. Acquired hospitality related program is asset. A "People Person". A d must be able to stand for a prolonged period of time.
Salary: $11.50 to $14.50 per hour

Suwaso Corporation would like to invite all qualified US workers to send their resume to hr.copspn@gmail.com or you can submit it to Coral Ocean Golf Resort, Human Resources Office not later than December 31, 2015 at 12:00 nn.

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Irving's late shooting leads Cavaliers past Suns, 101-97

PHOENIX (AP)—Kyrie Irving is back, and he definitely was needed on an off night for LeBron James.

Irving sank a 3-pointer as the shot clock expired with 21.9 seconds to play and the Cleveland Cavaliers held on to hand the Phoenix Suns their fifth loss in a row, 101-97 on Monday.

"It is a great feeling having the kid back," James said. "He does so much for our team."

Brandon Knight's 3-pointer cut Cleveland's lead to 96-95 with 1:27 to go and, after James missed a jumper, Knight hit another 3 but it was waved off because of an offensive foul against the Suns' Tyson Chandler.

The Cavs almost turned it over on their next possession but got the ball to Irving, who made a jumper from beyond the top of the key.

"J.R. Smith made an incredible winning play to save that ball," Cleveland coach David Blatt said. "That ball was going out of bounds and it looked like it would be their possession. He made a fabulous save. Kyrie made a huge shot."

Irving glanced at the clock and then coolly put the shot in the air.

"Those type of shots," he said, "it is just a calmness about it."

In his fourth game since returning from knee surgery, Irving also hit a 12-foot floater to put Cleveland ahead 96-92 with 1:44 to go.

Irving scored 22 points, Smith had 17 and Kevin Love added 16 for the Cavs, who ended a two-game skid. James had 14 points, only two on 0-for-3 shooting in the fourth quarter.

T.J. Warren scored 23 and Knight had 18 for the Suns, who earlier in the day announced they had fired assistant coaches Mike Longabardi and Jerry Sichting.

Nate Bjorkgren was promoted to take Longabardi's job as defensive coordinator. Assistant coach Earl Watson was promoted to a bench coach position.

Both teams were coming off their worst losses of the season. Cleveland was routed at Portland 105-76 on Saturday, the same night Phoenix lost an embarrassing one at home to Philadelphia 111-104.

In that defeat, the Suns lost leading scorer Eric Bledsoe to a torn meniscus in his left knee. The injury leaves Knight as the primary ball-handler for the next several weeks.

"We came out and fought the game all the way down to the last minute," Knight said, "so I think we put ourselves in a position to win or at least try to win. We've got to do a better job just correcting some things but I think the overall effort was better than it has been."

The Suns have lost 16 of their last 21, but at least this one provided reason for hope.

"It's still a loss," coach Jeff Hornacek said, "but it's encouraging that we're without Eric, we're out there a lot of time with Alex (Len) and Devin (Booker) and T.J., some of our young guys—that's a good effort. You can't fault that."

The Cavs took the lead for good with 5 minutes remaining in the first half but never were up by more than 11.

Warriors 122, Kings 103

In Oakland, Calif., Stephen Curry overcame a slow start to score 23 points as part of his sixth career triple-double and Golden State beat Sacramento for its 29th victory in 30 games this season.

Curry added a career-high 14 rebounds and 10 assists, Klay Thompson scored 29 and Draymond Green had 25 points for the Warriors, who have won 33 straight regular-season home games.

Omri Casspi scored a career-high 36 points, tying Mike Bibby's team record with nine 3-pointers for Sacramento. But the Kings still lost their 11th straight against their Northern California rivals.

The Kings were excited to have a healthy DeMarcus Cousins for the first time in three meetings with the Warriors this season. But the All-Star big man played less than 13 foul-plagued minutes.

Spurs 101, Timberwolves 95

In San Antonio, Kawhi Leonard had 17 points and 11 rebounds, Boban Marjanovic also scored 17 and San Antonio remained undefeated at home by holding off Minnesota.

San Antonio joined the 1978 Portland Trail Blazers and 1986 Houston Rockets as the only Western Conference teams to open a season 18-0 at home.

The Spurs had six players in double figures and overcame coach Gregg Popovich's early ejection.

Popovich was thrown out with 1:13 remaining in the first half on two successive technical fouls following a non-call on LaMarcus Aldridge.

With veteran star Tim Duncan sitting out due to a sore right knee, the Spurs (27-6) needed another big man to step up and Marjanovic did. He sparked two key runs for San Antonio, going 7 for 7 from the field and 3 of 4 on free throws in 15 minutes.

Andrew Wiggins led Minnesota with 18 points.

Hornets 108, Lakers 98

In Charlotte, N.C., Kemba Walker scored 18 of his 38 points in the fourth quarter, and Charlotte defeated Los Angeles in Kobe Bryant's final game in Charlotte against the team that drafted him—and promptly traded him—nearly 20 years ago.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' Kyrie Irving points to teammates on the bench after scoring a late three-pointer against the Phoenix Suns during the second half of an NBA basketball game Monday, Dec. 28, 2015, in Phoenix.

Cody Zeller had 16 points and eight rebounds, and Nicolas Batum added 15 points and 11 assists for the Hornets.

Bryant, who received a taped message from Hornets owner Michael Jordan before the game, finished with 20 points on 5-of-20 shooting. He had only three points in the second half, making just one of 10 shots.

Jordan didn't attend Bryant's final regular-season game in Charlotte, but congratulated him on an "unbelievable career" during a message that was played on the arena's scoreboard before tip-off.

Bulls 104, Raptors 97

In Chicago, Tony Snell and Pau Gasol each had 22 points, Derrick Rose added 20 and Chicago pulled away late to beat Toronto.

Snell, back in the rotation because of an injury to Doug McDermott, had 19 points in the final 17½ minutes to spark the Bulls.

Aaron Brooks scored 17 points and rookie Bobby Portis added 12 as the Chicago reserves outscored their counterparts 51-27.

Kyle Lowry had 28 points and DeMar DeRozan added 19 for Toronto. Jonas Valanciunas had nine points in 20 minutes off the bench after missing 17 games with a broken left hand.

Pacers 93, Hawks 87

In Indianapolis, Monta Ellis scored 26 points and Indiana snapped Atlanta's six-game winning streak.

Ellis had 15 points in the first half, and Ian Mahinmi finished with 13 points and nine rebounds.

With the Pacers leading by three, Ellis pulled up for a 3-point attempt with 16 seconds to play. The ball bounced off the rim, but Mahinmi was waiting for a tip-in that all but sealed it for Indiana.

Paul Millsap led the Hawks with 24 points. They had possession down three with less than 30 seconds remaining, but George Hill stole the ball from Jeff Teague.

Magic 104, Pelicans 89

In Orlando, Fla., Nik Vucevic scored 28 points and matched his career high with seven assists, leading Orlando over New Orleans.

Evan Fournier had 20 points, Tobias Harris added 14 and Andrew Nicholson scored 13 for the Magic, who used a pair of surges early in the third and fourth quarters to pull away.

Anthony Davis led the Pelicans with 20 points and eight rebounds. Tyreke Evans finished with 16 points and eight assists.

Clippers 108, Wizards 91

In Washington, Chris Paul scored 23 points, reserve Jamal Crawford added 21 and Los Angeles again overcame Blake Griffin's absence in beating Washington.

DeAndre Jordan had 15 points and 13 rebounds for the Clippers, who got 54 points from substitutes in their third straight win—second since Griffin was ruled out for at least two weeks with a quadriceps strain.

Even the 6-foot Paul helped make up for the loss of Griffin inside with a rare two-dunk performance. The Clippers never trailed and led by at least 10 throughout the last three quarters.

John Wall had 23 points and 11 assists, and Marcin Gortat added 12 points and 16 rebounds as the Wizards' four-game winning streak was snapped. Otto Porter added 21 points off the bench for Washington.

Nets 111, Heat 105

In Miami, Wayne Ellington tied a career best with seven 3-pointers and scored 26 points, Brook Lopez added 26 points and 12 rebounds, and Brooklyn rallied from 16 points down in the third quarter to beat Miami.

Jarrett Jack scored 18 for the Nets, who had lost seven consecutive games to the Heat going back to the 2014 playoffs. Shane Larkin had seven assists in the third quarter alone to spark Brooklyn's comeback, its biggest of the season.

Chris Bosh was a career-best 5 for 5 from 3-point range and finished with 24 points and 12 rebounds for Miami, which also got 24 points from Dwyane Wade. Hassan Whiteside had 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Heat, who have alternated wins and losses in their last eight home games.

Ellington's other game with seven 3s also came against Miami, when he was with Memphis in 2012.

Mavericks 103, Bucks 93

In Dallas, Wesley Matthews scored 22 points, including two clutch 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, and Dallas held off Milwaukee.

The Mavericks never trailed and led by as many as 13 in the second half, but needed consecutive 3s by Matthews to fend off a Bucks comeback.

He snapped an 89-all tie with a 3-pointer from the right wing with 4:25 to play, then followed Giannis Antetokounmpo's runner at the other end with another 3 with 3:50 remaining.

The Bucks didn't score again until Antetokounmpo's layup with 1:11 to play made it 97-93. Devin Harris sealed the game with a layup with 11 seconds left.

Zaza Pachulia added 17 points and eight rebounds for Dallas against his former team.

Jerryd Bayless returned to the Bucks' lineup after missing 11 games with a left ankle sprain and led Milwaukee with 19 points and seven assists.

Jazz 95, 76ers 91

In Salt Lake City, Gordon Hayward scored 24 points, including a 3-pointer that put Utah ahead for good against Philadelphia.

The Jazz ended a two-game skid despite missing Derrick Favors and high-scoring reserve Alec Burks.

The 76ers (2-31) were trying to win consecutive games for the first time this season after Saturday's victory at Phoenix.

The Jazz led by 19 midway through the third quarter, but the 76ers went on a 29-10 run to close the quarter.

Nerlens Noel caught an alley-oop from Ish Smith to put the 76ers up 91-89 with 38.3 seconds remaining. Hayward answered with a 3 with 33.5 seconds left to go up 92-91.

Smith scored a season-high 22 points in his second game with the 76ers after being traded from the Pelicans. Noel had 18 points and blocked five shots.

Ware lifts Broncos past Bengals 20-17 in overtime

DENVER (AP)—DeMarcus Ware put the clamps on the loose football and punched Denver's ticket to the playoffs.

"The ball was on the ground and I was feeling like, 'There's no way somebody's going to take this ball from me,'" Ware said after his fumble recovery in overtime sealed Denver's 20-17 victory over Cincinnati on Monday night.

Russell Bodine's catchable shotgun snap eluded AJ McCarron, who was making his second start in place of Andy Dalton. He raced to recover it, but Ware swept past right tackle Andrew Smith and secured Denver's fifth consecutive trip to the postseason.

"It was my fault. I told the team that," McCarron said. "I looked up to see the coverage and the snap caught me by surprise."

McCarron also hurt his left wrist on the play and wrapped it afterward. He said he wasn't sure how bad it's hurt, but "I'll get it checked out tomorrow and we'll see."

This was just the big play Ware's been looking for ever since missing a month with a bad back.

"Felt great to finish the game that way," Ware said. "We thought we were going to finish it with the field goal but at the end of the game, it's all about that win."

Ware's recovery followed a 37-yard field goal by Brandon McManus, whose shanked 45-yarder at the end of regulation made necessary the extra drama.

"I'm 24 years old and I don't think I've ever kicked the ball like that in my life: grade school, elementary school, or anything like that," McManus said. "I just wrapped my toe around it and I knew I had to bounce back."

He did, helping the Broncos (11-4) overcome a 14-0 first-half deficit and denying the Bengals (11-4) their first road win on a Monday night since 1990.

"There's an old saying: 'It's not how you start, it's how you finish,'" Broncos quarterback Brock Osweiler said. "And this team finished great tonight."

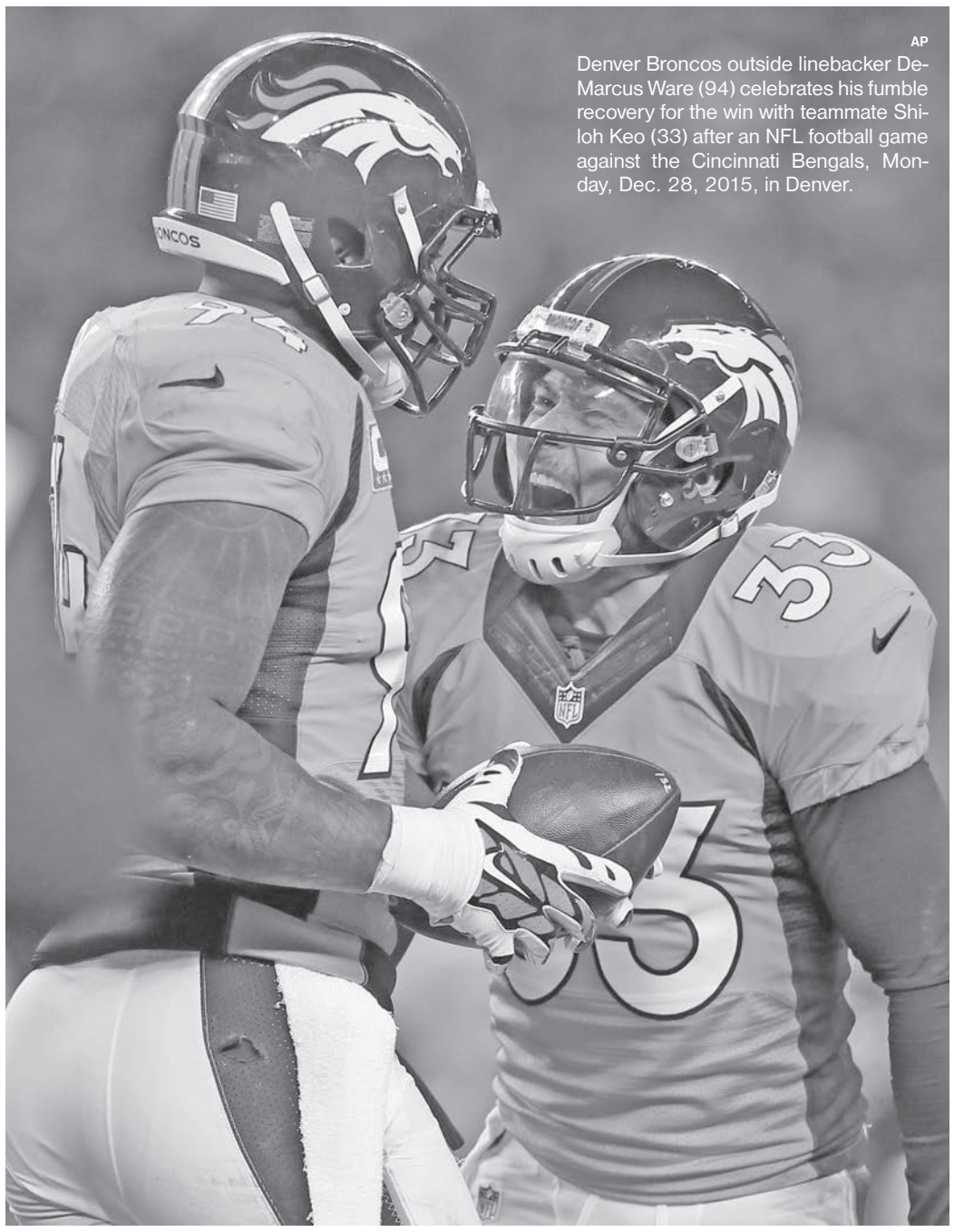
The Bengals blew a chance to earn a bye in the playoffs and move ahead of the New England Patriots in the race for the AFC's top seed.

"We knew what we have in front of us, an opportunity to get the bye," said Carlos Dunlap, who collected all three sacks of Osweiler. "It is what it is now. Now we're going to move on."

Denver, which was in danger of becoming the first team since the 1970 merger to miss the playoffs after starting 10-2, snapped a two-game skid with its third overtime win of the season.

Now, the Broncos can earn the top seed in the AFC with a win over San Diego and a loss by New England at Miami next weekend.

"We've won in a lot of ways this year," Broncos safety T.J. Ward said. "Overtime, game-winning field goals, blocked field goals, strips, fumble recoveries. When you get down to the playoffs you're going to need all those type of wins."



AP

Denver Broncos outside linebacker DeMarcus Ware (94) celebrates his fumble recovery for the win with teammate Shiloh Keo (33) after an NFL football game against the Cincinnati Bengals, Monday, Dec. 28, 2015, in Denver.

McManus has missed a kick in five consecutive games, and this one wasn't even close. It sailed wide left - missing the protective netting - to the astonishment of 74,511 fans even though the flags atop the goal posts revealed a complete lack of wind.

The relieved Bengals called tails but the coin landed heads.

Unlike Patriots coach Bill Belichick a day earlier, Broncos coach Gary Kubiak chose to receive, and Denver drove 60 yards in 13 plays. Osweiler, making his sixth straight start in place of Peyton Manning, played with a sore left shoulder and banged his left elbow in the frenetic final minutes but stayed in.

"Coming into the game, I was a little bit banged up. Coming out of the game I'm a little bit banged up. But that's football," said Osweiler, who will get the start against the Chargers next week, too.

McCarron drove the Bengals on two long first-half drives, covering 80 and 90 yards and eating up a total of 16:24 to put Cincinnati ahead 14-0. He threw a 5-yard TD pass to A.J. Green and Mohamed Sanu scooted in from 6 yards out on a direct snap.

After that, he found it tough to sustain drives against Denver's defense, which is ranked No. 1 against both the run and the pass and held McCarron to 200 yards passing and the Bengals to 3.3 yards a carry.

The Broncos pulled to 14-3 at halftime on McManus' short field goal, and the Broncos came out in hurry-up mode and were a different team in the second half - a reversal of last week at Pittsburgh, where they jumped out to a 17-point lead but were outscored 24-0 after the break.

Osweiler connected with Sanders on a short TD throw for Denver's first third-quarter points since Nov. 8 at Indianapolis, and C.J. Anderson gave the Broncos their first lead when he broke free for a 39-yard touchdown run with 11:17 remaining.

After Mike Nugent's 52-yard field goal tied it with 6:45 remaining, the Broncos twice drove to the Bengals 26 only to come away empty, once on Anderson's fumble and then on McManus' miss.

"We told him if you get another chance take advantage of it and he did," Demaryius Thomas said. "That's what won the game."

That, and Ware's huge play moments later.

Browns coach to talk with Manziel about latest video

CLEVELAND (AP)—Johnny Manziel's latest video appearance has the Browns concerned.

The second-year quarterback is expected to have a conversation with Cleveland coach Mike Pettine after another video surfaced over the weekend on social media of him partying. In the short clip, Manziel, wearing a "Merry Manziel" shirt, is seen singing along as "March Madness" by Future plays in the background. A framed jersey of Tampa Bay's Mike Evans, one of Manziel's Texas A&M teammates, hangs on the wall behind him.

Last month, Manziel was demoted from starter to third-string by Pettine after he denied that a video of him partying in Austin, Texas, was taken during Cleveland's bye week. Manziel had promised Pettine and other coaches he wouldn't be a distraction while the team was off.

On Monday, Pettine said he had not yet seen the new video of Manziel.

"Any time there's something with our players that casts them potentially in a bad light, whether it's Johnny or any of our other guys, it's certainly a concern," Pettine said on a conference call. "I'm sure I'll see it and have a discussion with him about it. These circumstances are different from the incident that occurred before. I'm just not going to go into a ton of detail with it until I get a little bit more information about it, but it's something that I'm sure privately we'll discuss if it needs to be discussed."

Pettine had promised there would be "harsh" repercussions if Manziel had another embarrassing issue. The Browns have been supportive of the 2012 Heisman Trophy winner, who has shown major progress in his second NFL season following a rough rookie year which was followed by a 73-day stay in a rehab facility for an unspecified condition.

Belichick stands by kicking off to start OT

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—Bill Belichick stood by his decision Monday to kick off to start Sunday's overtime in New Jersey.

The New York Jets scored quickly to win 26-20 and boost their playoff hopes. The loss deprived the Patriots of clinching the No. 1 seed in the AFC playoffs.

"I clearly thought that was our best opportunity, so that's why we did it," Belichick said on his regular Monday media conference call. "Didn't like the way it worked out, but to me that was the right decision for our team at that time."

After the Patriots rallied to tie in the closing minutes, Belichick instructed special teams captain Matthew Slater to say his team wanted to kick off. Slater seemed confused as to which way the Patriots would kick, but Belichick said Monday that didn't matter because there was little or no wind.

The Jets marched right downfield and won on Eric Decker's 6-yard TD reception, leaving New England having to go all out in the finale at Miami to clinch home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs—a game that would have been rendered meaningless with a win in the Meadowlands.

Belichick mapped out his reasoning, citing games in New England's past.

"Look, the bottom line is field position," he said. "Good field position, you don't have to take it as far, you get a stop, you get a field goal . it's really more a field position consideration. In other overtime games that we've been in, regardless of which way it went - the Denver game (a win) from a couple of years ago, or the Denver game (a loss) from this year, where we had the ball, got stopped, gave it them in good field position - they ended up scoring a touchdown, but they didn't have very far to go to get in field goal range."

As far as the confusion over which way the kickoff would go, Belichick said, "The discussion (with his captains) was that we wanted to kick off, No. 1. No. 2, if we didn't win the toss then we had the preferred direction. Honestly, it really didn't make any difference, there was almost no wind in the game, so that wasn't a big consideration.

"What I did want to do is defend a goal and have them choose to kick off. We chose to kick off and . I don't know exactly happened out there at midfield, but we obviously didn't have the choice of goals, they did. We talked about that on the sideline because that could have been our choice had the coin toss gone differently."

Belichick informed the officials he wanted to kick well before the coin toss was held.

"For that exact reason, so there wouldn't be any confusion about what was going on. That's why when I was asked after the game was there confusion on the play, I don't think there was any confusion," he said. "Then (referee) Clete (Bakeman) came over to me after the toss and said, 'You got what you wanted here right?' and I said, 'Yeah, exactly.' "

Belichick admitted he was perplexed by the reaction his decision has prompted.

"It seems like much ado about nothing for me; I don't really understand what the issue is," he said. "What are we talking about here? What should have happened that didn't happen or whatever? I don't know."

Belichick also defended running down the clock without using a timeout at the end of the first half. There have been several occasions when the Patriots have scored at the end of the half and then gotten the ball right back after halftime.

"We hadn't moved the ball a whole lot at that point," he said. " I don't know if we had 100 yards total offense, it couldn't have been much more than that. Had we broken a play and gotten into decent field position, then we would have tried to get closer and in field goal range. But as it was . we had the ball on our 16-yard line."

Rodriguez rules pre-Christmas billiards tournament

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Roman Rodriguez, center, poses with Nolan Cultura, left, and Manny Mariano after winning last week's pre-Christmas 8-Ball billiards tournament held at the Joker's Bar & Grill in Garapan.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Roman Rodriguez received a pre-Christmas gift last week when he ruled the Saipan Billiards Association-organized 8-Ball Christmas tournament held on Dec. 23 at Joker's Bar & Grill in Garapan.

Rodriguez swept past his opponents to bring home $120, a ham courtesy of Joker's, and the champions trophy provided by Pacific Amusement, Inc.

He completed his title run after beating Nolan Cultura in the finals following an undefeated campaign in the tournament that used a double-elimination round format.

Rodriguez's other victims were Rey Hermogenes, Rodel Dela Cruz, Ray Matsunaga, and Manny Mariano to clinch the first finals berth.

Cultura, on the other hand, was relegated to the loser's bracket after an opening round loss to Albert Pangilinan.

He then clawed his way back into contention as he dispatched the other players in the loser's bracket beating Mariano, Joseph Achas, John Reyes, Sene Pangilinan, and Brian Nelvis.

Cultura then secured a finals date with Rodriguez after a semifinals win over Mariano.

His impressive run came to a halt when he lost to Rodriguez and settled for $80. He also received a ham and runner-up trophy, while Mariano finished third and bagged $40, a ham, and a trophy.

Warlee Ellama, Erwin Gomez, Randy Sablan, and Jack Thornsaket were the other players that joined the tournament but were sent packing early in the contest.

The tournament was held since no games were played in the Thursday League on Christmas Eve and again on Dec. 31, New Year's Eve.

Results of the Open 8-Ball Tuesday League where not yet available at press time, while action in the Open 8-Ball Thursday League will resume on Jan. 7.

The Joker's WildBoyz will take on National Alamo, the Joker's Homeboyz will be hosting Jonny's Team SCS, and the Wild Bill's Rack 'N' Roll faces off with sister team Wild Wild West next year.

Mt. Carmel leads opening day winners in Holiday Hoops

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Mt. Carmel School and three other teams won their debuts in the 2015 Tan Holdings Christmas Basketball Tournament last Saturday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

The Lady Knights were pitted against Kagman in one of the two women's games in the opening day of the annual league, dubbed Holiday Hoops, and cruised to a 62-23 win.

Tawnie Manibusan topscored in MCS' easy victory, firing 17 points, including the team's last 7 markers that put the finishing touches in the Knights' rout of the hapless Kagman. Manibusan and company set up the lopsided win after taking a 34-12 halftime lead.

Jan Travilla knocked in 14 points in the first half to help the Knights dictate the tempo of the match before Manibusan took over in the second and pound Kagman. No Kagman player scored in double figures as it was clearly outgunned by MCS shooters.

In the other women's division match, Sun Palace also eased past Lob City, 44-28.

Chevy Kate Alipio and Irish Pagarao teamed up in Sun Palace's demolition of Lob City, scoring 22 and 14 points, respectively. The duo alternately hit baskets in streaks to lift Sun Palace to a 16-point winning margin.

Pagarao and Alipio made all but 4 of Sun Palace's 21 points in the first half, which ended with Lob City behind by only 6. Alipio then registered 8 of Sun Palace's first 12 points in the second frame, while Pagarao had a string of 7 markers before the former wrapped up the game by nailing the team's last three baskets.

Meanwhile, the Ol'Aces and Rollers 1 won the two boys U19 division matches last weekend.

Rollers 1 whipped the Runnin' Rebels, 67-55, while the Ol'Aces outclassed Rollers 2, 58-45.

Rollers 1 blew the game wide open in the second half after leading by only 3 at the break, 27-24.

Jethro Cruz anchored the breakaway, firing all his 13 points in the final 20 minutes of play. Mike Arciaga and Prince Factor combined for 15 more points in the second half to back up Cruz.

The Runnin' Rebels was led by the 20 points of Greg Sablan.

In the other boys U19 tiff, the Ol'Aces leaned on the 16 points of Aiferon Atan to beat Rollers 2. Nak Nakashima also helped the Ol'Aces'cause, adding 11 points.

The boys U19 division has five teams with the 670 Sonics completing the field, while two more are entered in the women's division with Party Droppers and Chow Time rounding out the list. Games are played every Thursday and Saturday only.

Ridin'Darrty, Predators vie for A Division top spot

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Jokers Puntan I Langit celebrate their last week's win over the DNA Jump It in the C Division of the Bud Light-Saipan Electronic Darts Association League's Winter/Spring 2016 season.

The Naked Fish Ridin'Darrty and the 6JMS Predators have alternated as the A Division leaders after last week's matches in the Bud Light-Saipan Electronic Darts Association League's Winter/Spring 2016 season.

The Ridin'Darrty recorded their 38th win after 51 games following a 17-0 trashing of the cellar-dwelling 6JMS Sakude! The Predators had the most wins at 44 but also had 24 losses for second place.

Daryl "Diesel" Brennan, June "Awesome" Nunez, Don "Nashty" Brennan, Boom "Bang" Cruz, James "Got Plenty" Benavente, and Carter "Ace" Calma never gave the Sakude! room to operate to complete the win.

The Ridin'Darrty was in the zone opening their campaign by sweeping the Singles 501 event.

Tony Tomokane, Jeff Pangelinan, James Tudela, Frank Sablan, and Abraham Reyes failed to get their game going as Sakude! dropped further down the standings at 13-38.

The Jokers 81 Shockers (28-23), Doro's Snipers, 35-33, 6JMS 101 Proofers (34-34), 6JMS Mafia (33-35), Doro's Hunters (22-29), and Oleai No Fear (25-43) complete the standings in the A Division.

In other games, the Snipers squeezed out a 9-8 decision over the Shockers, while the Predators and Proofers each dealt No Fear and the Mafia a 12-5 beating.

There were no games in Thursday's Fanihi and Flame Tree divisions last Christmas Eve and again on New Year's Eve. Results of last Monday night's matches were not yet available at press time. Other results of last week's games are as follows:

Tuesday B

- Dabarkads 12, Warriors 3
- Northern Lights 11, G-Side Shooters 4
- Chamberos 10, Hot Points 5
- 21 Shockers 8, Spartans 7

Masters

- Pythons 12, Darteros 5
- Nakayoshi 10, Daddies 7

C Division

- Puntan I Langit 13, DNA Jump It 2
- Tavern 8, Managaha Boyz 7
- C-Busters 8, Just Dart It 7
- Spartans 11, Mixed Nuts 4

RED

From Page 28

After Quan's jumper, Blue Team was left with 3 seconds to make the last play in the match. Blue Team was then pressed to call a timeout and at the resumption of the game, Matt Duenas did the inbound and passed the ball to Esdrelon near the left corner, but the latter could not pull up for a shot as the long arms of Quan and Dixon Kwon were around him. Esdrelon was forced to throw the ball to Michael Achas at the left key, but the former was also fully covered and still had the ball when time expired.

Red Team escaped with the win despite wasting a 5-point cushion, going into the one minute and change of the close match. Esdrelon wiped out Red Team's lead and set up the nth deadlock in the game, 99-all, with a turnaround jumper and a step-back triple, 1:36 left on the clock.

Two defensive lapses from Blue Team in the ensuing plays resulted to an Alex Lauron easy layup and a split free throw from Ivan Devero that gave Red Team a 102-99 lead, 1:01 remaining in the game. Blue Team then tied the match anew off Michael Achas' two charities and Duenas' split off a foul from Kwon. After Achas' pair of free throws, Kwon turned the ball over past midcourt and Duenas picked it up, driving to the basket and drawing contact on the Red Team wingman. Duenas' first attempt from the foul line rimmed out, but his second hit nothing but the bottom of the net.

Kwon then made up for his booboo in the ensuing play as after Fernando missed a right baseline jumper, the former got the ball Lauron tapped out in the rebound play and hit a banked shot to put Red Team back in the driver's seat, 104-102, with 29.5 seconds of the match.

Down, but definitely not out, Blue Teams called its penultimate timeout and had Rangamar attacking the basket at the resumption of the game. He overshot his mark, but fortunately, Esdrelon was there for the follow-up and the game-tying basket.

Esdrelon's big basket, however, was countered by Quan's jumper that gave the All-Star Game championship trophy to the Blue Team.

Quan was among six Red Team players to score in double figures, as he finished with 18 points. Kwon led Red Team with his 23 markers. Ivan Devero chipped in 21, while Lauron and Fernando added 12 apiece, and Tony Diaz contributed 10.

Duenas had 37 for Blue Team, which got 29 markers from Esdrelon. Rangamar registered 15.

Red Team 106 – Kwon 23, Devero 21, Quan 18, Lauron 12, Fernando 12, Diaz 10, Sanciangco 6, Benavente 2, Poquiz 2.

Blue Team 104 – Duenas 37, Esdrelon 29, Rangamar 15, Litulumar 9, M. Achas 7, Velasco 3, Kaipat 2, Arreza 2.

Scoring by quarters: 29-23, 57-50, 78-74, 106-104.

PGC

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emonies, and where most of the games will also be held.

The PGC executive board, according to the report, said that if VAN2017 GOC failed to comply with the steps to be taken their assessment would be that the "Government of Vanuatu is now in default of its host contract obligations to financially underwrite the staging and organization of the 2017 Pacific Mini Games."

Prime Minister Sato Kilman, however, assured the PGC that they remain committed of hosting the Mini Games and will comply with the steps suggested by the council.

VASANOC CEO Henry Tavoa, in a separate interview by Radio New Zealand, said "it would be disastrous if the [Mini] Games were taken away from Vanuatu."

The PGC executive board and the 21 other Pacific Games Associations will visit Port Vila in May for the annual General Assembly and to also check on the progress of Vanuatu's preparation.

HERAS

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the hosts' Polly Barnett, Sarah Coleman, Olivia Huang, Emmy Lappel, Kelsey Lewis, Julia Ramos, Laicy Nicole Rogerson, and Holly Smith.

In the Margaret Court Cup, which is named after the Albury, New South Wales player who won 62 Grand Slam titles, the players list is unavailable at press time, but Heras and Miyawaki are expected to compete in the team event on Jan. 7 and represent Pacific Oceania. Games from Jan. 8 to 12 are for individual singles and doubles events.

CNMI coach Jeff Race is hoping that the two junior netters will play a lot of good matches in the two tournaments in Australia.

"The competitions are tough, but our kids have done well there in the past. Both Carol Lee and Tim Quan are past champions. I know they (Miyawaki and Heras) will do their best to represent the CNMI well and it'll be an opportunity for them to get a lot of really good matches," Race said.

Lee won both the girls U12 singles events in the Margaret Court Cup and Victorian Junior Grasscourt Championships in 2014, while Quan topped one of the boys U18 events sanctioned by Margaret Court Tennis Academy in 2005.

7th Annual Tan Holdings Tennis Classic

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Ericka Tuttle reaches in for the ball during her girls U12 game against Coume Kaga in the 7th Annual Tan Holdings Tennis Classic held last month at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Coume Kaga goes for a backhand return to Ericka Tuttle.

A.J. Hudkins serves to Aditya Rai.

Seung Jin Paik receives a shot from Ji Min Woo.

Ji Min Woo steps back for a return to Seung Jin Paik during their boys U12 title match.

Umpire Jeff Race, center, talks to finalists Seung Jin Paik, right, and Ji Min Woo before starting the game.

Ami Tsukagoshi serves to Isabel Heras during their semis game in the girls U16 singles.

Robbie Schorr makes a shot near the net during a warm-up for his match against Aditya Rai.

Isabel Heras chases a low ball during her semis game against Ami Tsukagoshi.

Irving's late shooting leads Cavaliers past Suns, 101-97
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Sports

Ware lifts Broncos past Bengals 20-17 in overtime
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Red nips Blue in JP World All-Star Game

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Red Team nosed out Blue Team, 106-104, in the All-Star Game in the 2nd JP World Corp. Customer Appreciation Basketball League last Monday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Sid Quan drilled the winning basket in the closing seconds of the match that was supposed to be a friendly one, but turned out as a competitive game with neither team willing to give in.

The All-Star match was so tightly contested that no squad led by more than 8 points and there were several deadlocks with the last one at 104-all after Elmer Esdrelon made a putback off a miss from Derrick Rangamar's up-and-under move, 22 seconds left on the clock.

Red Team sued for time after Blue Team equalized and when the game resumed, the former worked the ball around and used some time before Quan pulled the trigger and hit the dagger from the right baseline. Quan had earlier found himself open at the same spot, but he hesitated because when he glanced at the clock, he saw there were still 10 seconds left. He opted to swing the ball back to Angelo Fernando, who then drove to the basket and drew two Blue Team defenders before returning the ball to Quan for the go-ahead basket.

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Red Team's Dixon Kwon pulls up for an off-balance shot against Blue Team's Matt Duenas, left, and Fred Litulumar during the fourth quarter of the JP World league's All-Star Game last Monday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

PGC expresses concern for Vanuatu 2017

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Vanuatu Prime Minister Sato Kilman, fourth left, joins Pacific Games Council president Vidhya Lakhan, third left, and other members of the executive board after their meeting early this month in Port Vila.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Pacific Games Council, with still two years left, has expressed concern on the ability of Vanuatu to fulfill its obligation of hosting the 2017 Pacific Mini Games.

Construction of sports facilities were derailed after Cyclone Pam hit the South Pacific island nation in March this year.

PGC president Vidhya Lakhan presided over an urgent meeting early this month to get a progress report from the Vanuatu Association of Sports and National Olympic Committee and the Vanuatu Games Organizing Committee.

Lakhan, in a report emailed to member nations, said the "PGC has grown increasingly concerned on Vanuatu's readiness to host the Mini Games since progress of their preparations were slow even after the hosting rights was awarded to them in September 2011."

The PGC presented VASANOC and Vanuatu's government with some steps that they need to take to help speed up their preparation for the 2017 Mini Games, which is set from Dec. 2 to 14.

The organizing committee moved the dates from summer 2017 to December after repairs and other improvement on the venues damaged by Cyclone Pam are facing some delay.

The PGC wants the organizing committee to present construction agreements, timelines for the Korman Stadium's redevelopment by the Chinese government; and passage of legislation confirming VAN2017 Games Organizing Committee's legal status.

Parliamentary approval of the VAN2017 GOC's operating budget and the appropriation of its operating funds for 2015 are also needed in order for them to finally appoint a chief executive officer, who is an expert in handling the project, to lead the organization.

Korman Stadium will host the opening and closing cer-

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Heras, Miyawaki off to Australia

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI junior players Isabel Heras and Malikawa Miyawaki are leaving Saipan early next month to compete in two tournaments in Australia.

The two Commonwealth players will be playing in the 2016 Margaret Court Cup and the 2016 Victorian Junior Grasscourt Championships, which are tournaments organized by Margaret Court Tennis Academy. The first competition will run from Jan. 7 to 12 in Albury, while the second will take place from Jan. 12 to 17 in Wodonga. Heras and Miyawaki earned tickets to the two tournaments in the Land Down Under after their notable performances in the 2015 North Pacific Regional Championships and stints in the 2016 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships.

In the tournament in Wodonga, Miyawaki is entered in the girls U14 singles and doubles.

So far 11 players are listed in the main draw with Fiji's Saoirse Breen and Australia's Chloe Breteton, Zoey Daggmarr, Sidni Finch, Mikelli Garratt, Sara Kostic, Chelsea McGrath, Elena Micic, Elana Nasr, Iva Pandurevic, and Mehirio Tauto joining Miyawaki.

In the girls U16 singles draw, Heras will be battling the division crown against Fiji's Ruby Coffin and Vienna Kumar, Solomon Islands' Vinda Teally, Samoa's Anasis Saipele, and

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Isabel Heras, seen here playing in last month's 7th Tan Holdings Tennis Classic at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, will leave Saipan with Malika Miyawaki next month to compete in tournaments in Australia.